

TRAGEDIES OF SEX

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BY

FRANK WEDEKIND

Translation and Introduction by

SAMUEL A. ELIOT, JR.

Spring's Awakening (Frühlings Erwachen)

Earth-Spirit (Erdegeist)

Pandora's Box (Die Büchse der Pandora)

Damnation! (Tod und Teufel)

FRANK HENDERSON

76 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C. 2

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
SPRING'S AWAKENING (FRÜHLINGSERWACHEN)	1
EARTH-SPIRIT (ERDGEIST)	111
PANDORA'S BOX (BÜCHSE DER PANDORA) . .	217
DAMNATION! (TOD UND TEUFEL)	305

INTRODUCTION

Frank Wedekind's name is widely, if vaguely, known by now, outside of Germany, and at least five of his plays have been available in English form for quite some years, yet a résumé of biographical facts and critical opinions seems necessary as introduction to this—I will not say authoritative, but more careful—book. The task is genial, since Wedekind was my special study at Munich in 1913, and I translated his two Lulu tragedies the year after. The timidity or disapprobation betrayed in this respect by our professional critics of foreign drama makes my duty the more imperative. James Huneker merely called him “a naughty boy!” Percival Pollard tiptoed around him, pointing out a trait here and a trait there, like a menagerie-keeper with a prize tiger. Viereck once waxed rapturous over Reinhardt's production of *Spring's Awakening* (that gave me my own first inkling of what Wedekind might mean for me), but my friend Moderwell tossed him off in less than a page of *The Theatre of Today* as an immoral joker out of *Simplicissimus*. It is true that Wedekind is by no means easy to grasp or tabulate, true that greater men, such as Strindberg, have suffered from similar slighting and ill-considered estimates here, before they were suitably interpreted; but

Wedekind has been dead five years, and the time for a fair and thoughtful, if very inexhaustive, judgment of him has surely come.

Although he was of the same generation as the naturalistic dramatists who everywhere came to the fore in the 1890's—Hauptmann, Chekov, Brieux, etc.—Frank Wedekind was not of them, but far ahead of them. They are now all but out-moded; his influence has barely begun. He did not fit his time: the first twenty years of his active life, in fact, were spent in continuous friction with the contemporary world. He experienced the rancor and contempt, the smart of injustice and the hopeless hatred, of most outcasts from society. Hostility toward bourgeois civilization is the keynote of many of his works. He is—against, I think, his natural tendency—a pessimist—all the blacker for the flame of strange, Utopian ideals still flaring up in his most savage scenes. The wrestle of contradictory wills within him is what gives his writing its abnormal tensility, what drives him often to overstrain each dramatic idea till its analogy to life is so distorted most people find it morbid. He yearns to annihilate the crude, the coarse, the ugly and the weak. He has declared, “The reunion of holiness and beauty as the divine object of pious devotion is the purpose to which I offer my life: toward which, indeed, I have striven since earliest childhood.” Physical beauty, he means: a sort of Pagan worship of the body—its lowest impulses and its highest development. . . . But in every direction he found that reunion obstructed by

his all-too-well regulated German civilization. Like his own Marquis of Keith he feverishly pursued the joy of life and could never enjoy his life: when about to strike a splendid blow for his Promised Land he would see a spike-helmeted angel with a police-club sentinel at Eden's gate. Only in the present century—only, indeed, after the Great War had determined, for the Continent, what the outstanding characteristics of the twentieth century were to be—did Wedekind, the Expressionist, who despised literature and thrust raw life upon the stage, arrive at his present commanding position and win the admiration and discipleship of many of his countrymen.

Though he died in March, 1918, he had incorporated in many a play before then both the sensational content and the free, direct, spasmodic form which German literature, especially German drama, was to show in the post-War turmoil and distress. Georg Kaiser and the other Expressionists so prized to-day can make no secret of their debt to him, and the wild rush they represent and play to—to contemplate man's lowest impulses, the roots of will and feeling, the instincts, not the ideals that actuate confused and drifting peoples, and having studied them in crude, disordered life to set them down in baldest, swiftest speech, in rank but penetrating truth—this rush that is observed in all the Continental countries but most among the Germans did there alone possess a guide and prophet in the dead author, analyzer, wry and bitter thinker, Wedekind.

Less than a twelvemonth after his decease, a des-

perate, revolutionary era found suddenly in this perverse and pessimistic man, in his harsh world of whores and swindlers, ruthless materialists and broken poets, its own true shape and pressure. At the same time the former standards of good taste, and theatre-censorships, were swept away; the ban which had lain heavily on Wedekind throughout his stormy life, the legal ban and the far more significant disfavor of the "good citizens," arbiters of general opinion, whom he had outraged so in their smug goodness, their virtuous ideals, their bourgeois self-esteem,—these now were lifted from his works: *Pandora's Box* became—imagine it—a popular attraction; from him who had so foreseen the breakdown of conventional formulæ and unreal modes of thought all men now feverishly sought some intimation of what society, dazzled with commotion, must yet look forward to.

For us in America, confirmed, not shattered, in our previous illusions and conceit by the war's outcome, there is less reason to embrace this scornful soothsayer, this emissary (one is tempted to believe) from Mephistopheles himself,—now cold and condescending, and again intent with hectic hate. For all the foolish outcry over the freer manners, perhaps the looser morals, of our youth, we are still certain in America of our subjective health, of some objective verities at least, of "progress," of "ideals," of many metaphysical abstractions which Wedekind distrusts, shows up, derides. Ambassador Gerard, innately, sensibly, was most American. In his *Four Years in*

Germany he mentions shudderingly our author's name, points to the fact that Berlin still was going, over and over, to performances of *Earth-Spirit* as but one more indictment of a degenerate, odious nation, and plainly shows us what must be the straight American's reaction to this volume—if such “straight,” normal readers should ever take it up. But none the less it is important for America to question and to try, to root, if need be, hog-like, to the bottom of our civilization's pile, and recognize the gross and primitive, the basely human, that underlies each separate soul of us and all our deeds. Naturalism of one type or another—nineteenth-century literalness or twentieth-century explosiveness—is for us the necessary form our Art must take; for only through the pitiless representing of home truth can the easy sentimentalism, so hostile to real literature, be combated, and America given self-knowledge and real grounds for spiritual leaps in after-years. O'Neil in drama, Masters in poetry, Anderson, Lewis, Frank and many more in fiction, these undeflected observers of our seamier sides, prepare the way for the full appreciation due to Wedekind. They are more literary, more artfully self-conscious than he in his best work. Technique concerns them more. But it is not merely for the light his drama throws on dominant European interests of the moment, it is also for the impulse he may give to further, similar probing and expression here at home that these four plays have been prepared—revised or newly now translated—for eager and

earnest readers and (who knows?) it may be, for the stage.

They are linked together, these four culled from the score of Wedekind's writing, not solely in theme (for though they are recognized in their own land as the *Geschlechtstragödien* par excellence, there are other tragedies of sex from Wedekind's later years), but in sequence too, chronological, philosophic. What an echo, for instance, of the freshness and the fervor of *Spring's Awakening* we hear in the scenes where Hugenberg, the schoolboy of *Earth-Spirit*, Act IV, and *Pandora's Box*, Act I, reveals his virginal, enthusiastic, adventurous, devoted flush of life. How subtly is Lulu foreshadowed in the vivid sketch of Ilse in *Spring's Awakening*: buoyant, unmoral, —simple in her acceptance of life complete, more likable than Lulu in her pity, too, for those not so full-blooded. How keenly Casti-Piani piques our interest, in *Pandora's Box*, Act II; how satisfyingly his life is summed and closed in *Tod und Teufel*—verily *Damnation!* The four plays hang together, and present compactly Wedekind's own growth of mind—from ardor, almost missionary zeal, instilling his own subjective sympathy into his youngsters, girls as well as boys, of *Spring's Awakening* (and his own hate, as well, of teachers, parents, all their dry repressive world), to the objective but still passionate building of full-formed characters, solid plot, unswerving tragedy (no Muffled Gentleman here!) in *Earth-Spirit*, and then to the less contained, extravagant riot, repulsively cold or hotly ugly,

perverse, verbose, derisive of his audience and even of his art, that he so rightly named *Pandora's Box*; and lastly to the frank self-revelation, unrealistic preaching, unmotivated, unartful, yet superbly confident theatricality of his *Damnation!*

What a life of disillusionment, self-questioning and pain must lie behind these changes! Its externals Wedekind sketched himself, in 1901; but its real import can only be deduced from close, fond study of his many plays, his stories and his poems. His father, a physician, lived—it may be interesting to us Americans to know—in San Francisco from the beginning of the gold rush in 1849 till 1864. His mother was an actress in the German theater there when the elder Wedekind, at 46, met her and married her, a girl just half his age. Her father, an inventor, manufacturer and gifted musician, had died some years before in a German insane asylum. One child was born to the couple in America, but they returned to Germany in 1864 and there, in Hanover, Frank (note the American, quite un-German form of the name) was born, on the 24th of July.

In 1872 the family moved to Switzerland, where Frank grew up, one of six children, amid scenery that he praises but which, to judge by the absence of any response to the beauties of nature from most of his work, had little effect upon him. At 19 he began to earn his living, at first as a journalist, at 22 as a press-agent, at 24 as a private secretary, traveling extensively with his employers (notably the painters Rudinoff and Willy Grégor) in France and England.

In 1895-96 he was a public reader of Ibsen plays in Switzerland; in '96-97, political editor of *Simplicissimus* in Munich; in '97-98, an actor and producer in a theatrical company which toured North Germany in Ibsen plays and first presented on the stage his *Earth-Spirit*, written in '93, published in '95. In '98-99 he held a similar important post with the resident company of the Schauspielhaus in Munich and wrote his great, though local, comedy *The Marquis of Keith*.

Save for a term in prison as a result of the prosecution of the editors of *Simplicissimus* for lèse-majesté,—a term enriched by the composition of his long story of Utopian education—physical education—for young girls, named *Minne-haha* (again the influence of America), which to my ears is the most pure and limpid piece of German prose one is ever likely to find,—he continued to reside in Munich, active in this or that playhouse or cabaret, for the rest of his life. He composed many *Brettl-lieder*, rhymes and music, and sang them in Bohemian restaurants. Every June, after Max Reinhardt became a theatrical power in Berlin, he appeared there as an actor in a series of his own plays, hastily prepared but persistently repeated to a slowly growing, grudgingly appreciative public. As an actor he was a paradox: more natural than Naturalistic, but more Expressionistic than expressive. I saw him act several times in his *Franziska*, his new play in 1912-13, and marveled at the almost inarticulate strain, the rigid body, popping eyes,

deep-lined and taut-drawn face, that marked him then. Sartorially he was something of a dude: to be correct was a requirement he forced upon his mettlesome temperament. His inheritance, derived from a mixture of middle-aged, scientific, abstract-minded, cold North German and young, sensuous, emotional, artistic Austrian, resulted in a conflict that could be seen by anyone: he possessed thesis and antithesis but never synthesis. His face expressed by turns his fluctuant, opposing sides, Jesuit and ironic actor, tragedy and vice, now gray, sharp-eyed, superior,—suddenly warm and deep. He was no artist on the boards—too stiff, too choked with his own earnestness, too genuinely intense,—but he was vastly interesting as a man, a sufferer, a moralist and preacher inured to being scoffed at and returning the too normal world hot scorn for scorn.

Extravagances and overemphasis, unmotivated, violent decisions and spasmodic super-vitality in his characters, all these his vividest traits, are explicable on this score of his own clashing disharmony within. But he himself explains them as an artistic revolt, merely, against the repressed and colorless dramaturgy which conquered Germany in the wake of Ibsen. These bookish plays that stood in the way of his own starkly abundant theatric art both angered him to protest and augmented his own trend toward free unnaturalness. He has in his time, he says (in *Schauspielkunst*, a collection of critical notes published in 1910), played many parts by Sudermann, Hauptmann, Max Halbe, etc., and he is sure that

actors trained in their literary technique are unequal to his fierce, full-blooded characters. He demands acting that shall be like hurdle-racing—bold, bounding creativeness—but the lesser actors blue-pencil their hurdles out of the way, while the greater ones make long “dramatic pauses” before them and deprive them so of conviction. Certainly, Wedekind’s jerky stage-style requires a rushing performance to give even the semblance of smooth truth to the preposterous, but, when rightly played, thrilling theatric stories he often tells. Short-of-breath, dry and uninspired, with voice untrained for emotional seizures and outbursts, the ordinary cup-and-saucer actor must of course mar Wedekind’s plays.

In the field of ethics, however, lay his sharpest cleavage from his own generation, and his most dangerous pitfall. The mighty influence of Ibsen had perverted, when Wedekind began to write, not merely stagecraft, but all German drama, and turned it to the contemplation not of life and action, but of principles: guilt, duty, and atonement. Under-running all the enthusiasm for exact representation and thorough character-delineation that reigned in 1890 was an anæmic current of literary preconceptions, second-hand ideals, and prime attention to externals, either mere incidental questions of technique or moral, philosophic conclusions (most often suicidal) to problems of responsibility and conduct prearranged for meek and docile characters. In the Prologue to *Earth-Spirit*, Wedekind specifically

mocks the pale and will-less heroes of Hauptmann's *Lonely Lives* and *Before Sunrise*, and by implication all the conscientious weakness of the then new Naturalism. He for his part had a sharp hunger for life, irrespective of its moral aims and effects, —life boisterous, physical and energizing. It is reflected in Melchior in *Spring's Awakening*, with keenest sympathy. He had also a theory, expressed by Alva, his self-portrait in *Pandora's Box*, that the place to find compelling drama was in the changeful lives of people who never read a book, who lived by instinct and expressed themselves, words and deeds, in total ignorance of cultured ethics. The Paris and the London scenes of *Pandora's Box* may indicate that in those cities the young dramatist plunged into this demimonde in person, experienced much, and actually undermined, instead of strengthening, his artistic creative power.

In '90-91, when he wrote *Spring's Awakening*, the 26-year-old pioneer playwright was still close to adolescent tumult, doubt and rapture. He writes a fluent, subtly interconnected, almost musical suite of scenes utterly real when dealing with the children and youthfully satirical when caricaturing the adults. He has no literary by-end, no preoccupation with form or naturalism as such, and while he has a moral, or rather an anti-moral, purpose, and evidently seeks to include in his play the ontogeny of all the more common sex-perversions, his chief interest is in Melchior, Moritz and Wendla—the vividness and promise of the life awakening in them, the cruelty and tragedy

of its extinguishment, for which the adult world must take full blame. Whether the play was produced at all in the 1890's I do not know. Reinhardt, who had had marked success with *Earth-Spirit* among his very first independent productions, in 1902-03, gave a very notable interpretation of *Spring's Awakening* in 1906 which attained 390 performances; and it has been widely acted since then, and in book form has far outstripped the popularity of any other Wedekind work. A very imperfect translation appeared in this country about 1909, and a private production was later attempted in New York, with ludicrous inartistry. The "lesson" of the play—"Parents, respect the possibilities of puberty, and give it enlightenment and guidance"—is an old story with us now. We must not forget the date on Wendla's tombstone: the play transpires in 1892. But the multifarious, teeming life, the loveliness and universal naturalness of the chief characters, and the free, ardent expression of the young author,—these are of no specific time, and will keep Wedekind's name alive for generations of adolescent readers.

His foreign experiences seem to have taken place between the writing of this play and that of *Earth-Spirit*. The author is quite out of sight in *Earth-Spirit*; he is the animal-tamer of the Prologue, the showman putting his performers through their acts. There is a grim objectiveness about this study of clashing wills and fatal weaknesses. No moral is in sight, and if the technique is con-

sciously more conventional and studied (note Alva's soliloquy in Act III), the matter is far removed from the Ibsen-Hauptmann fashion of its day. The dialogue is so idiomatic, so carefully fitted to each speaker's character, that this play is by far the hardest of the four to put in English. Wedekind has dramatized the attractions and repulsions of sex among mature people very variously endowed with strength and courage. He has created Lulu, the embodiment of primitive, natural, instinctive femininity, and watched her drive men mad. He offers no judgments, he indulges in no retrospects or explanations: this is the fundamental stuff of life as he has lived it and observed it. It takes a naturally theatric shape: it is violently dramatic just because it is real and living.

To these powerful, objective '90's of Wedekind belong also the one-act play *Der Kammersänger* or *The Tenor*, acted in New York in 1916 and published in *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays*; and *The Marquis of Keith*, in which the struggle for success and money is as turbulently dramatized as the sex-conflict was in *Earth-Spirit*. But there is a moralizing character in *The Marquis*, a foil for the conscienceless hero and also a mouthpiece for Wedekind. As he found himself and his message disregarded, bitterness overcame him, and more and more he scolds or preaches directly at his public. He worked over *Pandora's Box*, off and on, throughout this decade, and the impulse to expound himself ever and again peeps through its three distorted pictures

of low life. Here and there it is deliberately disgusting. When it was published, in 1901 or '02, most of Act II was in bad French, much of Act III in worse English: author or publisher or both were self-conscious about it: and promptly it was banned. There ensued appeals through various courts, and finally the ban was lifted, an all-German text prepared, and occasional productions ventured. My translation, published in New York in 1914, has never roused objection; why should it?—the bare speeches without the accompanying action which I have heard vividly described by friends lately in Germany, can scarcely be shocking to readers in 1923. Later, Wedekind published the two *Lulu* plays together under her name, omitting *Earth-Spirit*, Act III (which seems to me indispensable, none the less), and *Pandora's Box*, Act I—a commendable compression, because the whole cholera episode is morbid and nearly incredible, and a swift flight to France after Schön's murder is quite thinkable without the long, mostly undramatic speeches that overload the present commencement of *Pandora's Box*.

The pessimism of the last act is terrific and leads straight to the mood of *Damnation!*—a sort of satyr-play, concluding the three tragedies. In it, quite unrealistically, is passionately expressed what *Pandora's Box* implies—the hopelessness, the impossibility of happiness (for one, that is, whose conception of happiness is physical) from life as at present organized. This was the mission—this and the

various remedies that Wedekind proposed—which the world persistently, unshakably condemned. Wedekind writhed. Between *Pandora's Box* and *Damnation!* (1905) appeared two scarcely disguised subjective plays, *King Nicolo*, or *Such is Life*, which is very largely autobiography transferred to fourteenth-century Italy, a swift, dramatic and pathetic tale genuinely engaging our sympathies; and *Hidalla*, or *The Giant Dwarf*, which partly by satire, partly by outright propaganda, sets forth the Wedekindian point of view—the necessity for a new morality, for those who are rich enough to afford it: a morality that puts beauty, not material welfare, first among its objects, and especially revolutionizes sexual life. The worthlessness, for Wedekind, of intellectual concepts, theories, spirituality and all other abstractions—his utter absorption in the darker, inner world of feeling, will and instinct, especially the world of his own jarring soul, unheeding others or society at large, robs this one-sided drama of true tragic force. He tried again to justify himself in his next two plays: *Music*, a quite objective study of the havoc artistic education, seduction, abortion, the punishment of abortion, etc., etc., may cause; and *Censorship*, a wholly subjective one-act written after the lawsuits over *Pandora's Box* had been settled, and striving, not too transparently, to show the world his truly self-sacrificial and missionary spirit. By this time disciples were beginning to come to him; he married; and the force of his irritation spent itself. His last period begins.

It had little that was new to offer. *Schloss Wetterstein* is an engrossing, if extravagant, sex-tragedy in three semi-independent acts, reminiscent of the *Lulu* plays but laid in an aristocratic environment. The Jack the Ripper of its gruesome end is an American millionaire—an artist in sadism. Had Wedekind been reading of Harry Thaw? *Franziska* is a parody of *Faust*, a sort of feminine Faust, a phantasmagoria in which there every now and then outcrops a striking, profound, or even beautiful moment. *Franziska* finishes not in Faust's heaven, but in domesticity, and one cannot clearly discover whether this is mockery or a real change of view. *Samson*, or *Shame and Jealousy*, and *Herakles*, are blank-verse plays of Hebrew or Hellenic legends, written with lessening power and intensity,—plays dramatic, poetic, passionate enough to rank with Hauptmann's work of the same period but not "so fair, so wild, so brightly flecked" as Wedekind once had been. In the first year of the War, finally, appeared a curiously objective historical character-study in eight scenes, *Bismarck*, plainly rerunning Drinkwater's *Lincoln* and its successors, and utterly un-Wedekindian in style—not a word of sex, of satire, or of himself. The full tale of his work includes, besides the above, four very light satiric farces—one of them, *The World of Youth*, dated 1889, a most interesting prelude to nearly all his later ideas; two esoteric verse-dialogues, two pantomime scenarios constructed in the '90's, the time of his greatest power, and anticipating modern movie

and ballet technique; a large number of poems, mostly erotic ballads that he sang to his own accompaniment (I was reminded of them, and him, when I first heard Bobby Edwards of Greenwich Village), and some prose tales, shorter than *Minne-haha*.

Always he dealt in will, in inner urges, often specifically in "the hellish drive out of which no joy remains alive." His characters, no matter how often balked, derided, or wounded, return to the attack until they are killed. Emotion is an inexhaustible force. The drama of opposed views, of contrasted attitudes on points of conduct or belief, can offer nothing so enthralling as this insatiable struggle for the most fundamental pleasures humanity knows—which never ultimately or for long are pleasures! And the same Satanic return to the attack, repeated efforts at destruction, are seen in Wedekind's own life, hurling play after play against conventional society. At last, after his death, conventional society broke down, and the forces of disruption honored him, and the confused masses sought in his other, Utopian, constructive work for light upon the society that is to come. To few writers is such posthumous homage given; by few can such a reversal of judgment be expected. Wedekind remained ever true to himself, his deeply divided, contrary self, now appearing through his plays, now vanishing again behind his characters, but always vividly alive: one could feel *him*, one had the sense of human passion and struggle, of something personally experienced and sweated out, in almost all his work. Hence,

in the last analysis, his hold upon our later generation: we too want life, not literature—personality, not limpid art—original thought, even destructive and extravagant, not old truths, even the deepest, newly dressed. Wedekind, like Strindberg, like Andreiev, and like Shaw, meets these demands. If America should ever have reason to turn pessimistic, Wedekind will be waiting; and even as America is, in Wedekind she can find much that is vital, life-promoting, of immediate power and worth.

SAMUEL A. ELIOT, JR. p .

Smith College,
January, 1923.

SPRING'S AWAKENING
(FRÜHLINGS ERWACHEN)

A Children's Tragedy

Dedicated to

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN

CHARACTERS

MELCHIOR GABOR	} <i>Schoolboys, aged 14 to 17</i>
MORITZ STIEFEL	
HÄNSCHEN RILOW	
ERNEST ROEBEL	
LÄMMERMEIER	
OTTO	
GEORGE	
ROBERT	

DIETHELM	} <i>Boys in a House of Correction</i>
REINHOLD	
RUPRECHT	
HELMUTH	
GASTON	

MR. GABOR, a Judge	} <i>Melchior's Parents</i>
MRS. FANNY GABOR	

MR. STIEFEL, *Moritz's Father*
MR. •ZIEGENMELKER, *his Friend*
MR. PROBST, *Moritz's Uncle*
REV. MR. KAHLBAUGH, *Pastor*

DR. SONNENSTICH, Principal	} <i>The Faculty of the Boys' School</i>
DR. AFFENSCHMALZ	
DR. KNOCHENBRUCH	
DR. ZUNGENSCHLAG	
DR. KNÜPPELDICK	
DR. HUNGERGURT	
DR. FLIEGENTOD	

HABEBALD, *the School Beadle*

DR. PROKRUSTES, *Head of the House of Correction*

A LOCKSMITH

DR. VON BRAUSEPULVER, M.D.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN

MRS. BERGMANN

INA MÜLLER, *her married daughter*

WENDLA BERGMANN, *her 14-year-old daughter*

MARTHA BESSEL	} <i>Wendla's Friends</i>
THEA	

ILSE, *an older girl, an artist's model*

The Scene is laid in Southern Germany or in
Switzerland. The Time is from May
to November, 1892.

A NOTE ON THE STAGING

SPRING'S AWAKENING is divided into Nineteen Scenes
as follows:

- ACT I: SCENE 1. In Mrs. Bergmann's House.
SCENE 2. A Park.
SCENE 3. The Same.
SCENE 4. The School Yard.
SCENE 5. In the Woods.
- ACT II: SCENE 1. Melchior's Study.
SCENE 2. Same as I, 1.
SCENE 3. In the Rilow House.
SCENE 4. A Hayloft.
SCENE 5. Mrs. Gabor's Room.
SCENE 6. The Bergmann Garden.
SCENE 7. A Path near the River.
- ACT III SCENE 1. The Faculty Room at the
School.
SCENE 2. By the Wall of the Grave-
yard.
SCENE 3. In the Gabor House.
SCENE 4. In the House of Correction.
SCENE 5. Wendla's Bedroom.
SCENE 6. A Vineyard.
SCENE 7. The Graveyard.

It will be noted that the scenes concluding the acts, long scenes all of them, are intended to occupy the full stage, and that the prior scenes in each act may be played in the foreground.

Two of the scenes, II, 3, and III, 6, have nothing to do with the story and to save time may be omitted, though the latter has another importance, lightening with its idyllic atmosphere the squalor and bitterness of the last act. If it *is* omitted, III, 4, and III, 5, might be played in reverse order.

The simplest arrangement of the stage would be a neutral proscenium, six or seven feet deep, pierced with doors. Behind this, different backwalls can be lowered, and all the interior scenes played in this shallow front space. On the back of the stage should be sloping ground covered with underbrush, and a path winding down through it. In the middle-stage can be set the properties for special scenes—a bench in a box-hedge for I, 2 and 3; a huge oak-trunk for I, 5; a garden wall with grass and violets for II, 6; the graveyard wall with Moritz's grave for III, 2, etc. The swiftest possible sequence of scenes within the act is of prime importance.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A pretty little room, with a window looking out on an early spring garden. WENDLA's bed in one corner, wardrobe in the other, table and two chairs between. Doors just below bed and wardrobe.*

WENDLA *stands at the foot of the bed, all dressed except for her frock, which hangs on the chair in front of her. Her mother stands on the other side of the table, with a long dress in her hands.*

WENDLA—Why did you make the dress so long for me, mother?

MRS. BERGMANN—You're fourteen years old to-day!

WENDLA—If I had known you were going to make my dress so long, I'd rather not have been fourteen.

MRS. BERGMANN—It isn't too long, Wendla. What do you want? Can I help my girl's growing two inches taller every spring? A girl as grown up as you can't go round in a little princess-dress!

WENDLA—All the same, my little princess-dress looks better on me than that nightgown. Let me wear it just once more, mother! Just this summer! That penitence-frock will suit me just as well at fifteen as at fourteen: let's hang it up till my next birthday! Now I'd only tread on the braid.

MRS. BERGMANN—I don't know what I ought to say. I'd like so much to keep you this way, child,—just as you are. Other girls are overgrown and awkward at your age. You're just the opposite. Who knows what you will be like when the others are fully developed?

WENDLA—Who knows? Perhaps I shan't be at all.

MRS. BERGMANN—Child, child, what makes you think such things!

WENDLA—Don't, mother dear; oh, don't be sad.

MRS. BERGMANN—[*Kissing her.*] My only darling!

WENDLA—They come to me so, night-times, when I can't go to sleep. They don't make me a bit sad, and I know I sleep better afterwards. Is it wrong, mother, to think about things like that?

MRS. BERGMANN—Go, dear, and hang the “penitence-frock” away, and put on your princess-dress again, God bless you! When I get the chance I'll put another breadth of ruffles on the bottom of it.

WENDLA—[*Hanging the dress in the wardrobe.*] No! Then I might as well be all of twenty right away!

MRS. BERGMANN—If only you don't get too cold. In its time that little dress was plenty long enough for you, but now——

WENDLA—Now, with summer coming? Oh, mother, not even little children get diphtheria in their knees! Why are you so scary? At my age nobody freezes, least of all in the legs. Do you think it

would be better if I got too hot, mother? Thank the good God if your darling doesn't cut off her sleeves some morning and come to you at twilight without her shoes and stockings!—When I wear my penitence-frock I'll dress like a fairy queen under it. . . . Don't scold, motherkin,—nobody'll see how, then!

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*Sunday evening. A gravel walk in front of a park bench; shrubbery and tree-tops behind. MELCHIOR enters, followed by the other boys.*

MELCHIOR—I'm tired of that: I don't want to any more.

OTTO—Then the rest of us can just as well stop, too. Have you done your work, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—Go on playing, why don't you!

MORITZ—Where are you going?

MELCHIOR—For a walk.

GEORGE—It'll be dark soon.

ROBERT—Have you done your work already?

MELCHIOR—And why shouldn't I go for a walk in the dark?

ERNEST—Central America!—Louis XV!—Sixty lines of Homer!—Seven equations!

MELCHIOR—Damn the work!

GEORGE—Oh, if only Latin Comp. didn't come tomorrow!

MORITZ—One can't think of anything without some work coming in between!

OTTO—I'm going home.

GEORGE—I, too, home to work!

ERNEST—Me, too; me, too.

ROBERT—Good night, Melchior.

MELCHIOR—Sleep well! . . . [*All make off except MORITZ.*] Gosh, I'd like to know what we're in the world for!

MORITZ—School makes me wish I'd been a cab-horse sooner!—What do we go to school for? So that somebody can examine us. And what are we examined for? To make us flunk! Seven of us have got to flunk just because the classroom upstairs only holds^o sixty.—I've felt so queer since Christmas! Devil take me, if it weren't for Papa I'd tie up my bundle this very night and be off to Altoona!

MELCHIOR—Let's talk about something else.
[*They go for a walk.*]

[In practice, MELCHIOR can here fling himself down on the bench; MORITZ remain standing.]

MORITZ—Do you see the black cat there with its tail stuck up?

MELCHIOR—Do you believe in omens?

MORITZ—I don't quite know.—It came from over there.—Means nothing!

MELCHIOR—I believe that's a Charybdis everyone falls into who has struggled up out of the Scylla of religious nonsense. Let's sit down under this beech. The warm spring wind is streaming over the mountains. I'd like to be a young Dryad in the woods up there letting herself be rocked and swung in the highest tree-tops all night long to-night. . . .

MORITZ—Unbutton your vest, Melchior.

MELCHIOR—Ah, how it blows through one's clothes!

MORITZ—It's getting so jolly dark you can't see

your hand before your face. Where are you? [*He draws MELCHIOR down beside him. Only their voices, from here on, come out of the darkness.*] Don't you believe too, Melchior, that modesty in people is just the effect of their bringing-up?

MELCHIOR—I started thinking about that just the day before yesterday. No, after all it seems to me to be deeply rooted in human nature. Imagine undressing completely before even your best friend! You wouldn't do it unless he did it, too, at the same time. But it's also more or less a matter of custom.

MORITZ—I've sometimes thought, if I have children, boys and girls, right from the start I'll have them sleep together in the same room—if possible, on the same bed—and help each other twice a day to dress and undress,—and on hot days, boys and girls alike, let 'em wear nothing at all but a short tunic, white woolen with just a leather belt. It seems to me, if they grew up so, they'd surely, later, be more at ease than we are, usually. . . .

MELCHIOR—Oh, I'm sure of that, Moritz!—The only question is, what if the girls should have children?

MORITZ—How do you mean—have children?

MELCHIOR—I believe there's a kind of instinct in that matter. I believe, for instance, if you shut up a pair of kittens, male and female, and cut them off from any contact with the outer world—left them absolutely to their own impulses, that is—well, the female sooner or later would get pregnant, though

neither she nor the male had anyone to imitate or show them how.

MORITZ—With animals—yes—it must happen all by itself.

MELCHIOR—With people, too, just the same! I ask you, Moritz,—if your boys are sleeping on the same bed as the girls, and all of a sudden the first masculine impulses stir in them. . . . I'd like to bet with anybody. . . .

MORITZ—Yes, you may be right there. But all the same——

MELCHIOR—And with your girls it would be absolutely the same at the corresponding age. Not that a girl exactly—of course, one can't tell so well . . . at least, it would be natural to expect . . . and their curiosity, too, would be there, to do its share.

MORITZ—One question by the way——

MELCHIOR—Well?

MORITZ—You'll answer?

MELCHIOR—Surely.

MORITZ—True?

MELCHIOR—There's my hand. Well, Moritz?

MORITZ—Have you written your theme yet?

MELCHIOR—Oh, speak out what you want to say! No one can hear us or see us.

MORITZ—You understand my children would be made to work all day in the yard or the garden, or play games that called for real physical exertion. They'll have to ride and wrestle and climb, and of all things not sleep so soft at night as we do. We

are awfully softened! I don't believe people dream when they have hard beds!

MELCHIOR—I'm going to sleep from now till vintage time in just my hammock. I've shoved my bed behind the stove: they go together. Last winter I dreamt once that I whipped our Lolo till he couldn't move a limb! That was the most horrible thing I've ever dreamt.—What makes you look at me so strangely?

MORITZ—Have you felt them yet?

MELCHIOR—What?

MORITZ—How did you phrase it?

MELCHIOR—Masculine impulses?

MORITZ—M-hm.

MELCHIOR—Yes indeed!

MORITZ—I too.

MELCHIOR—In fact I've known that quite a while—nearly a year.

MORITZ—It struck me like a bolt of lightning!

MELCHIOR—You had dreamt?

MORITZ—Oh, just a flash . . . of legs in sky-blue tights climbing over the teacher's desk—to be exact, I thought they were going to climb over it. I only got a glimpse of them.

MELCHIOR—George Zirschnitz dreamt of his mother.

MORITZ—Did he tell you that?

MELCHIOR—Out there on the gallows-path. .

MORITZ—If you only knew what I've gone through since that night!

MELCHIOR—Qualms of conscience?

MORITZ—Qualms of conscience?—Pangs of death!

MELCHIOR—Good God. . . .

MORITZ—I thought I was past cure. I thought I was suffering from some inward weakness.—I only began to feel easier when I set out to take notes on the memories of my life. Oh, yes, Melchior! the last three weeks have been a Gethsemane for me.

MELCHIOR—I had been more or less prepared for it beforehand. I felt a bit ashamed, but that was all.

MORITZ—And yet you're almost a full year younger than me.

MELCHIOR—On that point, Moritz, I wouldn't waste much thought. By all I can make out, there is no definite age for this phantom's first appearance. You know that big Lämmermeier with the straw-colored hair and the big nose? He's three years older than me, but Hansy Rilow says that to this very day he dreams of nothing but tarts and apricot jelly.

MORITZ—I ask you, how can Hansy Rilow tell about that?

MELCHIOR—He's asked him.

MORITZ—He's asked him?—I'd never have dared to ask anybody!

MELCHIOR—You just asked me, didn't you?

MORITZ—Yes, I did!—Maybe Hansy had made his will too, beforehand!—Isn't it a queer game the world plays with us?! And we're supposed to be grateful! I don't remember having felt the least desire for this sort of disturbance.—Why couldn't I have been left sleeping quietly until everything was still again! Father and mother could have had a

hundred better children. But here I am, with no idea how I got here, and now I must be responsible for not having stayed away!—Haven't you sometimes thought about that too, Melchior: in what kind of a way exactly we got mixed up in this whirl?

MELCHIOR—Do you mean you don't know that either, Moritz?

MORITZ—How should I know?—I see how the hens lay eggs and hear how Mama says she carried me under her heart; but is that enough?—And I remember being embarrassed even at five years old when someone turned up the queen of hearts, she was, so décolleté. That feeling has gone; but to-day I can scarcely speak to any girl any more without something abominable coming into my head—and I swear to you, Melchior, I don't know what!

MELCHIOR—I'll tell you the whole thing. I've gotten it partly out of books, partly from pictures, partly from observations of nature. You'll be surprised. It made me an atheist at first. I told George Zirschnitz about it, too. He wanted to tell Hansy Rilow, but Hansy had learned it all from his French governess when he was a kid.

MORITZ—I've gone through Meyer's Abridged from A to Z. Words! just words and more words! Not one simple explanation! Oh, this reticence! What good to me is an encyclopædia that has nothing to say on the most vital question of all?

MELCHIOR—Did you ever see two dogs running about the streets?

MORITZ—No!—Don't tell me anything yet—not

to-day, Melchior! I've still got Central America and Louis XV before me, not to speak of the sixty lines of Homer, the seven equations, the Latin Comp. —I should lose out at everything to-morrow again. If I am to drudge successfully I must be as dull as an ox.

MELCHIOR—But come up to my room with me. In three-quarters of an hour I'll have the Homer, the algebra, and two Latin Comp.'s. I'll put a few harmless blunders into yours, and the thing's done. Mama'll make us some lemonade again, and we'll talk comfortably about propagation.

MORITZ—I can't!—I can't talk comfortably about propagation! If you want to help me, give me your information in writing. Write down what you know. Make it as short and plain as you can, and stick it between my books to-morrow at recess. I'll carry it home without knowing I have it, and come upon it sometime unexpectedly. I won't be able to help skimming thru it, even if I'm tired. . . . If it's absolutely necessary, you can draw something in the margin, too.

MELCHIOR—You're like a girl. . . . But just as you like. It'll be an interesting job for me all right. —One question, Moritz.

MORITZ—Hm?

MELCHIOR—Have you ever seen a girl?

MORITZ—Yes!

MELCHIOR—All?

MORITZ—Every bit!

MELCHIOR—I, too.—Then no illustrations will be necessary.

MORITZ—At the Shooting-meet, in Leilich's Anatomical Museum. If it had come up, I'd have been chucked out of school. As beautiful as the daylight—and oh, so true!

MELCHIOR—I was with Mama in Frankfort last summer— Are you going already, Moritz?

MORITZ—To get my work done.—Good night.

MELCHIOR—So long!

CURTAIN

SCENE III.—*A stormy afternoon. MARTHA, WENDLA and THEA are coming along the path.*

MARTHA—How the water gets into your shoes!

WENDLA—How the wind whistles past your cheeks!

THEA—How your heart pounds!

WENDLA—Let's go out to the bridge. Ilse said the river was full of bushes and trees. The boys have a raft on the water. They say Melchi Gabor nearly got drowned yesterday evening.

THEA—Oh, he can swim!

MARTHA—You bet he can, kid!

WENDLA—If he hadn't been able to swim, I guess he'd have been really drowned.

THEA—Your braid's coming out, Martha, your braid's coming out!

MARTHA—Pooh, let it! It bothers me so all the time! I can't wear my hair short, like you; I can't wear it loose like Wendla; I can't wear a bang; and at home I even have to put it up—all on account of my aunt!

WENDLA—I'll bring scissors with me to-morrow to the confirmation-class. While you're reciting "Well for him who erreth not" I'll cut it off!

MARTHA—For God's sake, Wendla! Papa'll beat

me to pieces, and Mama'll lock me up three nights in the coal-hole!

WENDLA—What'll he beat you with, Martha?

MARTHA—It often strikes me that they'd miss something, after all, if they didn't have such a horrid little brat as I am.

THEA—Oh, my dear!

MARTHA—Aren't you allowed to have a sky-blue ribbon thru the top of your chemise?

THEA—Pink satin! Mama thinks pink goes well with my pitch-black eyes.

MARTHA—Blue's awfully becoming to me.—Well, Mama yanked me out of bed by the hair—this way; I fell with my hands out on the floor.—You see Mama prays with us night after night. . . .

WENDLA—In your place I'd have run away from them long ago, out into the world.

MARTHA—There! That's it, that's just what I'm aiming at. That's just it.—But she'd like to see me! Oh, she'd just like to see me! At any rate, I shan't have anything to blame my mother for later on!

THEA—Huh—huh—

MARTHA—Can you possibly think, Thea, what Mama meant by that?

THEA—Not I— Can you, Wendla?

WENDLA—I would simply have asked her.

MARTHA—I lay on the floor and shrieked and screamed. In comes Papa. Rip!—Off with the chemise! Out of the door with me! There now! Maybe I'd like to go down on the street like that, eh? . . .

WENDLA—Oh, Martha, that just can't be true!

MARTHA—I froze. I told all about it. Well, I must sleep in the sack the whole night.

THEA—Never in my life could I sleep in a sack!

WENDLA—I really wish I could sleep in your sack for you sometime.

MARTHA—If only you're not beaten——

THEA—But don't you smother in it?

MARTHA—Your head stays out. It's tied under your chin.

THEA—And then do they beat you?

MARTHA—No. Only when there's something special.

WENDLA—What do they beat you with, Martha?

MARTHA—Oh, what—with anything handy.—Does your mother think it's "disreputable" to eat a piece of bread in bed?

WENDLA—No, no.

MARTHA—I do believe they enjoy it, though, even if they never speak of that.—When once I have children I'll let them grow up like the weeds in our flower-garden. No one bothers himself about them, and they stand so high, so thick!—while the roses in the beds are flowering worse and worse each summer.

THEA—When I have children I'll dress them all in rosy pink—pink hats, pink dresses, pink shoes. Only their stockings—their stockings will be black as night! Then when I go walking I'll have them march ahead of me.—And you, Wendla?

WENDLA—How do you two know that you'll have any?

THEA—Well, why shouldn't we have some?

MARTHA—It's true Aunt Euphemia hasn't any.

THEA—Silly! That's because she's not married!

WENDLA—Aunt Bauer was married three times, and hasn't got one.

MARTHA—If you have any, Wendla, which would you rather—boys or girls?

WENDLA—Boys! Boys!

THEA—Me too—boys!

MARTHA—Me too—better twenty boys than three girls.

THEA—Girls are tiresome.

MARTHA—If I weren't a girl already, I surely wouldn't want to be one any more!

WENDLA—That's a matter of taste, I guess, Martha. I'm glad every day that I'm a girl. I wouldn't exchange with a prince, believe me.—But that's why I'd only want boys.

THEA—But that's nonsense, Wendla, rank nonsense!

WENDLA—But look here, child,—mustn't it be a thousand times more uplifting to be loved by a man than by a girl?

THEA—But you wouldn't say that forest-inspector Pfälle loved Melitta more than she loves him!

WENDLA—Yes, I would, too, Thea.—Pfälle is proud. Pfälle is proud of being forest-inspector, for he has nothing else.—Melitta is happy, be-

cause she gets ten thousand times more than she is.

MARTHA—Aren't you proud of yourself, Wendla?

WENDLA—That would be silly.

MARTHA—How proud I wish I could be, in your place!

THEA—Only see how she puts her feet down, how straight ahead she looks, how she holds herself, Martha! If that isn't pride—

WENDLA—But what for? I'm so happy that I'm a girl! If I weren't one, I'd kill myself, so that next time . . . [*Stops, seeing MELCHIOR. He crosses past them, greeting them, and goes, followed by their eyes.*]

THEA—He's got a wonderful head.

MARTHA—That's how I think of the young Alexander, when he went to school to Aristotle.

THEA—Oh, good gracious! Greek History!—I only remember how Socrates lay in his tub when Alexander sold him the donkey's shadow.

WENDLA—They say he's the third best in his class.

THEA—Professor Knochenbruch says he could be first, if he wanted to.

MARTHA—He has a lovely forehead, but his friend has more soulful eyes.

THEA—Moritz Stiefel?—He's a stupid!

MARTHA—I've always gotten on with him perfectly well.

THEA—He humiliates you, no matter where you are with him. At the Rilows' party he offered me

some sugar-almonds. Imagine, Wendla,—they were soft and warm! Isn't that just—— He said he had kept them too long in his trousers pocket!

WENDLA—Think of this: Melchi Gabor told me that time that he didn't believe in anything—not in God, or in a future life—in just nothing in the world!

CURTAIN

SCENE IV.—*Near the Boys' School. All the boys but MELCHIOR and MORITZ and ERNEST ROEBEL are standing about expectantly.*

MELCHIOR—[*Entering.*] Can any of you tell me where Moritz Stiefel is keeping himself?

GEORGE—He's going to catch it—Oh, he's going to catch it!

OTTO—He'll go too far once, and then he'll get what's coming to him good and plenty.

LÄMMERMEIER—Lord knows *I* wouldn't like to be in his shoes at this moment!

ROBERT—Some cheek! Some impudence!

MELCHIOR—But wha—wha—what do you mean?

GEORGE—What do we mean?—Well, listen. . . .

LÄMMERMEIER—I wish I hadn't said anything.

OTTO—Me too—w i s h I hadn't!

MELCHIOR—If you don't tell me this minute—

ROBERT—Well, here it is: Moritz Stiefel has broken into the Faculty-Room!

MELCHIOR—The Faculty-Room!

OTTO—The Faculty-Room! Right after Latin.

GEORGE—He was the last out. He stayed behind on purpose.

LÄMMERMEIER—As I turned the hall corner I saw him opening the door.

MELCHIOR—You go to——

LÄMMERMEIER—Yeah, if only he doesn't go to——

GEORGE—I guess someone had left the key in the lock.

ROBERT—Or else Moritz Stiefel has a pick-lock on him.

OTTO—I'd believe it of him!

LÄMMERMEIER—If he has luck he'll only get a Sunday afternoon.

ROBERT—Along with a demerit in his report.

OTTO—If he doesn't get a suspension on top of a reprimand.

HANSY RILOW—There he is!

MELCHIOR—Pale as a sheet. [MORITZ *appears*, in the utmost excitement.]

LÄMMERMEIER—Moritz, Moritz, what have you done?

MORITZ—Nothing—nothing——

ROBERT—You're feverish.

MORITZ—With joy—with rapture—with jubilation——

OTTO—You were caught——?

MORITZ—I've passed!—Melchior, I've passed! Oh, let the world go hang now—I have passed!—Who would have believed that I'd be promoted! I can't realize it! Twenty times over I read it! I can't believe it—but God be thanked, there it was—there it stayed! I am promoted!—[*Smiling.*] 'I don't know—I feel so queer—the earth's going round. . . . Melchior, Melchior, if you only' knew what I've gone thru!

HANSY RILOW—Congratulations, Moritz!—Just be glad that you got away safe!

MORITZ—You don't know, Hansy—you can't imagine what depended on it. For the last three weeks I've slunk past that door as though it were the mouth of hell. Then, to-day,—it was ajar! I think if a million had been offered me, nothing, oh, nothing could have held me back! Before I knew it I was standing in the middle of the room—I was opening the record book, turning the pages, finding—and during all that time—it makes me shudder!——

MELCHIOR—During all that time——

MORITZ—All that time the door behind me was standing wide open!—How I got out, how I got down the stairs, I don't remember.

HANSY RILOW—Did Ernest Roebel pass, too?

MORITZ—Oh, yes, Hansy, sure! Ernest Roebel is promoted the same way.

ROBERT—Then you just can't have read right. Not counting the dunces' bench, there are sixty-one of us with you and Roebel, and the upper classroom can't hold more than sixty!

MORITZ—I read perfectly right. Ernest Roebel is moved up just as I am—both of us, for the present, to be sure, only provisionally. During the first quarter it will be decided which of us must make room for the other.—Poor Roebel! God knows I'm not afraid for myself any more. I've looked too far down into the depths this time for that!

OTTO—I bet you five marks it'll be you that makes room.

MORITZ—You haven't got it. I don't want to rob you.—Gosh, won't I grind from now on!—Now I can tell you all too,—and you can believe it or not, it doesn't matter now—but *I* know, *I* know how true it is: if I had not been promoted, I'd have shot myself.

ROBERT—Brag!

GEORGE—The coward!

OTTO—I'd like to see you shoot anything!

LÄMMERMEIER—Punch his face!

MELCHIOR — [*Punches LÄMMERMEIER.*] Come along, Moritz. Let's go to the forester's house.

GEORGE—Do you really believe that rot?

MELCHIOR—Is that your business?—Let 'em talk, Moritz. Just let's get away, out o' the city. [*He pulls him away. They meet PROFESSORS KNOCHENBRUCH and HUNGERGURT, touch their caps, and exeunt. The other boys vanish, to the other side.*]

KNOCHENBRUCH—It is beyond my comprehension, dear colleague, how the best of my pupils can feel drawn like that to the very worst of them all.

HUNGERGURT—And beyond mine too, dear colleague.

CURTAIN

SCENE V.—*A sunny afternoon in a wood of beech and oak trees. Thick undergrowth. A big oak-trunk with mossy roots. By it, WENDLA stands, looking about for the path. MELCHIOR breaks thru the brush.*

MELCHIOR—[*Secing her, stops dead.*] Is it really you, Wendla? What are you doing up here all alone? I've been tramping up and down this wood for the last three hours without meeting a soul, and now all of a sudden you step out of the thickest covert at me!

WENDLA—Yes, it's I.

MELCHIOR—If I didn't know you were Wendla Bergmann I'd think you were a Dryad fallen out of the branches!

WENDLA—No, no, I'm Wendla Bergmann.—Where have you come from?

MELCHIOR—I'm following my thoughts.

WENDLA—I'm looking for woodruff.¹ Mama wants to flavor May-wine with them. At first she was going to come too, but at the last moment Aunty Bauer turned up, and she doesn't like to climb: so I came up here alone.

MELCHIOR—Have you got your woodruff?

WENDLA—The whole basket full. Over there

¹ *Asperula odorata*.

under the beech-trees they're as thick as meadow-clover. Just now I'm looking round for a way out. I seem to have got mixed up. Maybe you can tell me what time it is.

MELCHIOR—Just after ha' past three.—When do they expect you back?

WENDLA—I thought it would be later. I lay a long time in the moss by the brook and dreamed. The time went by me so quickly, I was afraid it would soon be night.

MELCHIOR—If nobody's expecting you yet, let's lie down here a little while. Under the oak there's my favorite place. When you lean your head back against the trunk and stare thru the twigs at the sky, you get hypnotized. [*He does as he says.*] The ground is still warm from the morning sun. [*She sits on a root.*]—There's something I've wanted to ask you for weeks, Wendla.

WENDLA—But I must be at home before five.

MELCHIOR—We'll go in time together. I'll take the basket and we'll strike out thru the underbrush and get to the bridge in ten minutes. When one lies like this, with his forehead in his palm, one gets the strangest ideas. . . .

WENDLA—What was it you wanted to ask me, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—I've heard, Wendla, that you go a lot to poor people and take them things to eat and even clothes and money. Do you do that of your own accord or does your mother send you?

WENDLA—Generally Mother sends me. There are

poor laborers' families with an awful lot of children. Often the man is out of work, and then they're cold or go hungry. We have still such a lot of things left in cupboards and bureaus that we don't need any longer.—But what made you think of it?

MELCHIOR—Do you like to go, or not, when your mother sends you on such errands?

WENDLA—Oh, I like to ever so much!—How can you ask?

MELCHIOR—But the children are dirty, the women are sick, the rooms are alive with filth, the men hate you because you don't work——

WENDLA—That isn't true, Melchior,—and if it were true I'd go all the more!

MELCHIOR—What do you mean, Wendla,—all the more?

WENDLA—I'd go all the more for that: it would give me so much more pleasure to be able to help them!

MELCHIOR—Oh, so you go to the poor people for the pleasure you get out of it!

WENDLA—I go because they're poor!

MELCHIOR—But if it didn't give you any pleasure, would you stop going?

WENDLA—Well, can I help it if it does give me pleasure?

MELCHIOR—[*Rolling over and staring straight up.*] And yet it's for that that you'll get into heaven!—So it was true, the thought that has left me no peace for the last month!—Can the skinflint

help it if it doesn't give him any pleasure to go and visit sick and dirty children?

WENDLA—Oh, I'm sure it would give you the greatest pleasure!

MELCHIOR—And yet it's for that that he's condemned to everlasting death. [*Sits up, his back against the tree.*] I'll write it up and send it to Pastor Kahlbauch. He started me on this. Why does he drivel to us about "the joy of sacrifice"?—If he can't answer me I won't go to his Sunday-school any more, nor let myself be confirmed.

WENDLA—Why do you want to give pain to your dear father and mother? Let yourself be confirmed! It won't cost you your head! If it weren't for our horrid white dresses and your baggy trousers, perhaps one could even feel enthusiastic about it.

MELCHIOR—There is no self-sacrifice. There is no unselfishness.—I see the good rejoice in their goodness, and the wicked tremble and groan—I see you, Wendla Bergmann, shake your curls and laugh, and I get as glum about it as a pariah!—What did you dream about just now, Wendla, when you lay in the grass by the brookside?

WENDLA—Silly things—foolishness—

MELCHIOR—With your eyes open?

WENDLA—Oh, I dreamt I was a poor beggar-child, oh, awfully poor, who was shoved out on the street at five in the morning and had to beg the whole day long in wind and rain among harsh, hard-

hearted people; and if I came home at night shivering with hunger and cold, and hadn't as much money as my father wanted, then I was beaten and beaten. . . .

MELCHIOR—Oh, I know, Wendla. You get that out of silly kid-stories. Believe me, such brutal people don't exist any more!

WENDLA—Oh, yes, they do, Melchior,—you don't know!—Martha Bessel is beaten night after night, so that you can see the marks the next day. Oh, what she must suffer! It makes you boiling hot to hear her tell about it. I'm so terribly sorry for her, I often have to cry into my pillow in the middle of the night. For months I've been thinking and thinking how to help her. I'd joyfully put myself in her place for a week.

MELCHIOR—Her father should simply be reported to the police. Then they'd take the child away from him.

WENDLA—I, Melchior, have never been whipped in my life—not one single time. I can scarcely guess what it's like to be beaten. I've tried hitting myself, to find out how it feels really, inside.—It must be a shuddery sensation.

MELCHIOR—I don't believe a child is ever made better by it.

WENDLA—Better by what?

MELCHIOR—Being struck.

WENDLA—[*Reaching over and plucking a young shoot.*] With this switch, for example.—Whew, but that's strong and slender!

MELCHIOR—That would draw blood.

WENDLA—Wouldn't you hit me with it once?

MELCHIOR—You?

WENDLA—Yes.

MELCHIOR—What's got into you, Wendla?

WENDLA—[*Drawing back, a little alarmed.*]

Why shouldn't you?

MELCHIOR—Oh, don't shrink. I won't hit you.

WENDLA—But even if I let you?

MELCHIOR—Never, girl!

WENDLA—Even if I ask you to, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—Have you lost your senses?

WENDLA—I have never in my life been beaten!

MELCHIOR—If you can beg for a thing like that! . . .

WENDLA—[*Thrusting it into his hands.*] I do! Please!

MELCHIOR—I'll teach you to say Please! [*Strikes her.*]

WENDLA—Oh, what! I don't feel the least thing!

MELCHIOR—No wonder—thru all your skirts like that. . . .

WENDLA—Then hit me on the legs—here!

MELCHIOR—Wendla! [*Strikes her harder.*]

WENDLA—Oh, you're just stroking me!—You're stroking me!

MELCHIOR—You wait, you witch—I'll beat the devil out of you! [*He throws the sprig aside and falls upon her with his fists so that she breaks out with a fearful cry. Undeterred, raging, his blows*

rain on her thick and fast, while big tears overflow and streak his cheeks. Of a sudden, he springs upright, clasps his temples with both hands, and, passionately sobbing, plunges into the forest.]

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—MELCHIOR's study. *A recess, rear center, with casements looking out upon moonlit garden and dark, evening woods. Window-seat. Low table with a well-shaded oil lamp, books, cigarettes, etc. MORITZ and MELCHIOR sit on the two ends of the window-seat, in profile, facing each other.*

MORITZ—Now I'm quite cheerful again—only 'a bit excited. But in the Greek class I went to sleep like the besotted Polyphemus! I'm amazed old Zungenschlag didn't tweak my ears. This morning again I came within an ace of being late. My first thought when I woke up was of the verbs in -MI. Gee whiz, but didn't I conjugate all during breakfast and along the road till everything turned green before me!—It must have been a little after three when I dropped off. The pen left a blot on my book. The lamp was smoking when Matilda woke me. In the elders under my window the blackbirds were twittering so joyously—I got unutterably melancholy again at once. I buttoned my collar and pulled the brush thru my hair.—But you feel it when you force yourself against nature. . . .

MELCHIOR—Shall I roll you a cigarette?

MORITZ—No, thanks—I won't smoke.—If only it can keep on like this! I mean to work and work

till my eyes pop out of my head. Ernest Roebel has fallen down six times already since vacation—three times in Greek, twice with Knochenbruch, last time in History of Literature. I haven't been in that pitiful fix more than five times, and from to-day on it shall never happen again!—Roebel won't shoot himself. Roebel hasn't got parents who are sacrificing their all for him. Whenever he wants to, he can be a soldier of fortune or a cowboy or a sailor. But if *I* fail my father'll have a stroke and Mama'll go crazy. That's the kind of thing nobody would live to see. Before the exam I prayed God to let me get consumption, so that the cup might pass me by untasted. It did pass over—even tho its nimbus still gleams at me from afar so that I never dare to lift my eyes.—But now that I've got hold of the first rung I shall haul myself up. I'm sure of that, because the inevitable consequence of a fall will be a broken neck.

MELCHIOR—There's an undreamed-of meanness to this life. It wouldn't take much to make me hang myself up in the branches.—Wonder where Mama can be with the tea.

MORITZ—Your tea will do me good, Melchior.—I'm actually trembling! I feel so strangely sensitized. Touch me a moment. I see, I hear, I feel much more sharply, and yet everything's so dreamy, so charged with atmosphere.—How the garden recedes in the moonlight there, so still, so deep, as if it went on forever! Dim-veiled figures are moving among the bushes; they slip over the open tracts in breathless

activity, and vanish in the half-dark. I should say they were holding a conference under the chestnut-tree.—Shan't we go down, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—Let's wait till we've had some tea.

MORITZ—The leaves whisper so eagerly. It's as if I were hearing dead Grandmother tell the story of the Queen without a Head. She was a perfectly beautiful queen, fair as the sun, lovelier than all the maidens in the land,—only she had come into the world, alas! without a head. She couldn't eat nor drink nor see nor laugh nor kiss either. She could only make herself understood to her court thru her supple little hand. With her dainty feet she tossed off declarations of war and death-sentences. Then one day she was conquered by a king who happened to have two heads that were always at outs with each other—quarreled the whole year long so hard that neither let the other speak a word. So the chief court conjurer took the smaller of the two heads and set it on the queen; and lo and behold, it was mighty becoming to her; so then the king married the queen and the two were no longer at loggerheads but kissed each other on the forehead and the cheeks and the mouth, and lived for a long, long time after in happiness and joy. . . . Confounded rot! Since vacation I haven't been able to get the Headless Queen out of my head! If I see a beautiful girl, I see her without a head,—and then all of a sudden I appear as the Headless Queen—myself! . . . Well, it's possible that one will be set on my shoulders yet. [MRS. GABOR *enters with a*

tray of steaming tea, which she sets down on the table after moving the lamp a little, and then shakes hands with MORITZ.]

MRS. GABOR—Here, children! Fall to!—Good evening, Moritz Stiefel. How are you?

MORITZ—[*Standing.*] Well, thank you, Mrs. Gabor.—I'm listening to the roundelays down there.

MRS. GABOR—But you're not looking a bit well.—Don't you feel quite right?

MORITZ—It's nothing to speak of. I've been rather late getting to bed the last few nights.

MELCHIOR—Think of it—he's been studying all night!

MRS. GABOR—You shouldn't do that kind of thing, Master Stiefel! You should take care of yourself. Look out for your health. School can't take the place of health in your life. Take frequent long walks in the fresh air! That is worth more to you at your age than correct Middle High German!

MORITZ—I will go walking oftener. You're right. One can work, too, while one is walking. Why didn't I think of that myself!—The written lessons I should have to do at home just the same.

MELCHIOR—You'll do the written work here with me. That way it'll be easier for both of us.—You know, Mama, Max von Trenk has been down with brain-fever. Well, this noon Hansy Rilow came from Trenk's death-bed to inform Mr. Sonnenstich that Trenk had just died in his presence. "Is that so?" says Sonnenstich. "Haven't you still got two

hours' work to make up from last week? Here's the note to the proctor. See that the thing is cleared up at last. The entire class will attend the interment."—Hansy was simply paralyzed.

MRS. GABOR—What is that book you have there, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—"Faust."

MRS. GABOR—Have you read it all yet?

MELCHIOR—Not all thru.

MORITZ—We're just at the Walpurgisnacht.

MRS. GABOR—I should have waited a year or two more, if I'd been you, before reading that.

MELCHIOR—I don't know any book, Mama, that I've found so much that was beautiful in. Why shouldn't I have read it?

MRS. GABOR—Because you can't understand it.

MELCHIOR—How can you know that, Mama? I feel plainly enough that I'm not able yet to grasp it in its full sublimity, but . . .

MORITZ—We always read it together. That makes understanding it vastly easier.

MRS. GABOR—You are old enough, Melchior, to be able to judge what is good for you and what isn't. Do whatever you feel you can justify. I shall be the first to realize, and be glad, if you never give me any reason to have to withhold anything from you. I only wanted to remind you that even the best can do harm if one is still too immature to appraise it rightly. I shall always rather put my trust in you than in any possible set of educational rules.—If

you want anything else, children, come and call me, Melchior: I shall be in my bedroom. [*Exit.*]

MORITZ—Your Mama meant the story of Gretchen.

MELCHIOR—Have we lingered even a moment over that!

MORITZ—Faust himself can't have been more cold-blooded getting thru it!

MELCHIOR—After all, that villainy isn't the climax of the poem. Faust could have promised the girl marriage, he could have deserted her directly after, without being one whit less guilty in my eyes. Gretchen could have died of a broken heart for all the difference I'd see.—When you behold how intensely everyone always looks first for that sort of thing, you might think the whole world revolved round penis and vulva.¹

MORITZ—To be frank with you, Melchior, I've had exactly that feeling since I read your paper. It fell out at my feet in the first days of vacation. I had my Plötz [a French grammar] in my hand.—I bolted the door and ran through your quivering lines like a frightened owl flying through a blazing wood. I think I read most of it with my eyes shut. At your explanations a stream of vague memories rang in my ears like a song one used to hum joyously to one's self in childhood, and at the brink of death hears from the mouth of another, and is appalled.—My sympathy was aroused most by what

¹ In the original, P.... and V..., with four dots, not five, after the V.

you wrote about the girl's part. I shall never get over the impression that made. I'm sure, Melchior, to have to suffer wrong is sweeter than to do wrong. Blamelessly to have to undergo so sweet a wrong seems to me the essence of every earthly bliss.

MELCHIOR—I don't want my bliss given me as a charity!

MORITZ—But why not?

MELCHIOR—I don't want anything that I haven't had to struggle and win for myself.

MORITZ—But then is it still enjoyable, Melchior?—The girl's delight, Melchior, is like the blessed gods'. The girl represses. Her very nature protects her. She is kept free from any bitterness or regret up to the last moment, and so can see, all at once, heaven itself break over her. She is still fearful of hell in the very instant of discovering and embracing paradise. Her senses are as fresh as the spring that bubbles from pure rock. She lays hold of a cup no earthly breath has yet clouded—a draught of nectar that she takes and swallows even as it flames and flares. . . . The gratification that the man receives seems to me shallow and flat beside hers!

MELCHIOR—Let it seem what it will to you, but keep it to yourself. I don't like to think about it.

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—WENDLA'S room, empty. MRS. BERGMANN, her hat on, her shawl round her shoulders, a basket on her arm, enters with beaming face.

MRS. BERGMANN—Wendla! Wendla!

WENDLA—[*Appearing, half dressed, at the other door.*] What is it, Mother?

MRS. BERGMANN—Up already, dear? Well! That's nice of you.

WENDLA—Have you been out already?

MRS. BERGMANN—Hurry up now and get dressed! You must go straight down to Ina's and take this basket to her.

WENDLA—[*Finishing dressing during the following.*] Have you been at Ina's? How is Ina feeling? Isn't she ever going to get better?

MRS. BERGMANN—Just think, Wendla: the stork came to her last night and brought her a new little boy!

WENDLA—A boy?—A boy?—Oh, that's grand!—So it was for that she's been sick so long with influenza!

MRS. BERGMANN—A splendid boy!

WENDLA—I've got to see him, Mother!—So now I'm an aunt for the third time—one niece and two nephews!

MRS. BERGMANN—And what fine nephews they are!—That's just the way of it when one lives so close to the church roof.—It'll be just two [and a half?] years to-morrow since she went up those steps in her wedding-dress!

WENDLA—Were you with her when he brought him, mother?

MRS. BERGMANN—He had just that minute flown away again!—Don't you want to pin a rose on here? [*At the front of her dress.*]

WENDLA—Why didn't you get there a little bit sooner, Mother?

MRS. BERGMANN—Why, I do believe, almost, that he brought you something too—a brooch or something like that.

WENDLA—[*Losing patience.*] Oh, it's really too bad!

MRS. BERGMANN—But I tell you that he did bring you a brooch too!

WENDLA—I've got brooches enough. . . .

MRS. BERGMANN—Why, then be happy, darling. What are you troubled about?

WENDLA—I'd like to have known, so much, whether he flew in by the window or down the chimney.

MRS. BERGMANN—You must ask Ina about that. [*Laughing.*] You must ask Ina about that, dear heart! Ina will tell you all about it exactly. Didn't Ina spend a whole half-hour talking to him? .

WENDLA—I'll ask Ina as soon as I get down there.

MRS. BERGMANN—Be sure you don't forget, you

angel child! Really, I'm interested myself in knowing if he came in by the window or the chimney!

WENDLA—Or how about asking the chimney-sweep, rather?—The chimney-sweep must know better than anybody whether he flies down the chimney or not.

MRS. BERGMANN—No, not the chimney-sweep, dear; not the chimney-sweep! What does the chimney-sweep know about the stork? He'll fill you chuck-full of nonsense he doesn't believe himself. . . . What are you staring down the street so at?

WENDLA—A man, mother, three times as big as an ox!—with feet like steamboats—!

MRS. BERGMANN—[*Plunging to the window.*] Impossible! Impossible!

WENDLA—[*Right after her.*] He's holding a bedstead under his chin and fiddling "The Watch on the Rhine" on it—now he's just turned the corner. . . .

MRS. BERGMANN—Well! You are and always were a little rogue! To put your simple old mother into such a fright!—Go get your hat. I wonder when you'll ever get any sense! I've given up hope!

WENDLA—So have I, Mother; so've I. It's pretty sad about my sense! Here I have a sister who's been married two and a half years; here I am an aunt three times over; and I haven't the least idea how it all happens! . . . Don't be cross, motherkin! don't be cross! Who in the world should I ask about it but you? Please, Mother dear, tell it to me! Tell me, darling motherkin! I feel

ashamed at myself! Please, please, mother, speak! Don't scold me for asking such a thing. Tell me about it—how does it happen—how does it all come about?—Oh, you can't seriously expect me still to believe in the stork when I'm fourteen!

MRS. BERGMANN—But, good Lord, child, how queer you are! What things do occur to you! Really, I just can't do that!

WENDLA—But why not, mother? Why not? It can't be anything ugly, surely, when everyone feels so glad about it!

MRS. BERGMANN—Oh, oh, God defend me!—Have I deserved to—— Go and put your things on, girl, —put your things on.

WENDLA—I'm going . . . and supposing your child goes out now and asks the chimney-sweep?

MRS. BERGMANN—Oh, but that's enough to drive me crazy!—Come, child, come here: I'll tell you. . . . Oh, Almighty Goodness!—only not to-day, Wendla! To-morrow, day after, next week, whenever you want, dear heart!

WENDLA—Tell it to me to-day, mother. Tell it to me now; now, at once. Now that I've seen you so upset, it's all the more impossible for me to quiet down again until you do!

MRS. BERGMANN—I just can't, Wendla.

WENDLA—Oh, but why can't you, motherkin?—Here I'll kneel at your feet and put my head in your lap. Cover my head with your apron and talk and talk as if you were sitting all soul alone in the room. I won't move a muscle, I won't make a sound; I'll

keep perfectly still and listen, no matter what may come!

MRS. BERGMANN—Heaven knows, Wendla, it isn't my fault! The good God knows me.—Come, in His name!—I will tell you, little girl, how you came into this world—so listen, Wendla. . . .

WENDLA—[*Under her apron.*] I'm listening.

MRS. BERGMANN—[*Incoherent.*] But it's no use, child! That's all! I can't justify it.—I know I deserve to be put in prison,—to have you taken from me. . . .

WENDLA—[*Under her apron.*] Pluck up heart, Mother!

MRS. BERGMANN—Well, then, listen. . . .

WENDLA—[*Trembling.*] O God, O God!

MRS. BERGMANN—To have a child—you understand me, Wendla?—

WENDLA—Quick, mother! I can't bear it much longer!

MRS. BERGMANN—To have a child—one must love the man—to whom one is married—love him, I say,—as one can only love a man! You must love him so utterly—with all your heart—that—that—it can't be told! You must love him, Wendla, as you at your age can't possibly love anyone yet. . . . Now you know.

WENDLA—[*Getting up.*] Great — God — in Heaven!

MRS. BERGMANN—Now you know what tests lie before you!

WENDLA—And that is all?

MRS. BERGMANN—God help me, yes, all!—Now pick up the basket there and go down to Ina. You'll get some chocolate there, and cakes with it. —Come here—let me just look you over—laced boots, silk gloves, sailor-blouse, a rose in your hair. . . . But your little dress is really getting too short now, Wendla!

WENDLA—Have you got meat for dinner already, motherkin?

MRS. BERGMANN—God bless you and keep you!—I must find time to sew another breadth of ruffles round your skirt.

CURTAIN

SCENE III.—*A toilet—not to be thought of as equipped with modern plumbing.* HANSY RILOW enters, a light in his hand; bolts the door and opens the lid.

HANSY—Hast thou prayed to-night, Desdemona? [*He draws from his bosom a reproduction of the Venus of Palma Vecchio.*] I shouldn't say you looked like "Our Father Who Art in Heaven," darling:—awaiting contemplatively whoever may be coming, just as in that delicious moment of dawning rapture when I beheld thee lying in Schlesinger's shop-window—these supple limbs just as beguiling still, these softly swelling hips, these young, upstanding breasts!—Oh, how giddy with joy must the great master have felt when the fourteen-year-old original lay stretched on the divan before his eyes!

And wilt thou sometimes visit me in dreams? With eager arms will I receive thee, and kiss thee till thy breath is gone. Thou wilt take possession of me as the lawful heiress takes possession of her desolated castle. Gate and door spring open as by invisible hands, and below in the park the fountain joyously begins to splash!

"It is the cause! It is the cause!"—That I am not lightly moved to murder thee, thou may'st learn

from the fearful throbbing in my breast. My throat contracts at the thought of my lonely nights. I swear to thee, dear, upon my soul, it is not satiety inspires me! Who would dare boast that he was satiated with thee?

But thou dost suck the marrow from my bones! Thou crook'st my back, and rob'st my eyes of their last gleam of youth. You claim too much of me with your inhuman coyness, you wear me out with your unmoving limbs!—It's you or I!—and *I* who have prevailed!

If I should count them up—those vanished ones with all of whom I have fought this same fight here!—Psyche by Thumann—one legacy yet from that dried-up Mlle. Angelique, that rattlesnake in the Eden of my childhood; Io by Correggio; Galathea by Lossow; then an Amor of Bouguereau's; Ada by J. van Beers—that Ada whom I had to abduct from a secret drawer in father's desk, to add her to my harem; a quivering, thrilling Leda by Makart, that I found by chance among my brother's college lecture-notes; seven, O thou doomed in thy perfect flower, who have rushed before thee down this path into Tartarus! Let that give thee comfort, and seek not to heighten my pangs into agony with these supplicating looks!

Thou diest not for thy sins, but for mine! Need to defend myself against myself drives me with bleeding heart to do this seventh murder on a mate. There is something tragic in the rôle of Bluebeard. I guess that all his murdered wives

together suffered less than he did in the strangling of each single one.

But my conscience will grow calmer and my body stronger when thou, she-devil, residest no longer in the red-silk cushions of my jewel-casket. Then in thy stead I will have the Lorelei of Bodenhauseu or the Forsaken Lass of Linger or the Loni of Defregger occupy that voluptuous pleasure-chamber—provided I shall have recovered the quicker for this! A bare three months more, perhaps, and your unveiled Jehoshaphat, sweet soul, would have begun devouring my poor brain as the sun a butter-ball. It was high time to effect the separation from bed and board!

Brrr! I feel a Heliogabalus in me! Moritura me salutat!—O girl, girl, why do you press your knees together?—why still even now,—in the face of inscrutable eternity?—One spasm, and I will let thee live! One feminine movement, one sign of sensuality, of sympathy, girl! and I will frame thee in gold and hang thee above my bed. Art thou not conscious that it is thy purity, nothing more, begets my excesses? Woe, woe to the unhuman!

Anyone can see that she's had the advantage of a model education!—Well, so have I too.

Hast thou prayed to-night, Desdemona?

My heart contracts in convulsions—— Silly!—Holy St. Agnes died for her continence too, and was not half so naked as thou!—One more kiss on your virginal body, your child-like, budding breast, your sweetly rounded—cruel, unyielding knees. . . .

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!

It is the cause!——

[The picture falls into the depths. He shuts the lid.]

CURTAIN

SCENE IV.—*A hayloft. Murky light, the smell of fresh hay, MELCHIOR lying in it. WENDLA comes up the ladder.*

WENDLA—So here's where you hid! Everybody's looking for you. The wagon's gone out again. You must help. There's a storm coming up.

MELCHIOR—Get away from me!—Get away from me!

WENDLA—What's the matter with you?—Why do you hide your face?

MELCHIOR—Get out! Get out!—Or I'll throw you down on the barn-floor!

WENDLA—Now I certainly won't go. [*She kneels beside him.*] Why won't you come out on the hay-field with us, Melchior? Here it's so sultry and dark! What if we do get wet to the skin—we don't care!

MELCHIOR—The hay smells so wonderful.—The sky outside must be as black as a pall.—I can't see anything but the gleaming poppy at your breast,—and your heart, I hear it beating!—

WENDLA—Don't kiss me, Melchior!—Don't kiss me!

MELCHIOR—Your heart—I hear it beating—

WENDLA—People love each other—when they kiss—— Don't! Don't!——

MELCHIOR—Oh, believe me, there's no such thing as love!—Self-seeking, egoism,—that's all there is! —I love you as little as you love me.——

WENDLA—Don't!——— Don't, Melchior!——

MELCHIOR— . . . Wendla!

WENDLA—Oh, Melchior!——don't—don't——

CURTAIN

SCENE V.—MRS. GABOR *sits and writes.*

[Or else she may be shown in a dark room, in silhouette against the window, reading her letter over by its falling light.]

MRS. GABOR—My dear Moritz Stiefel!

I take up my pen with a heavy heart after twenty-four hours of considering and reconsidering everything that you write me. The money for passage to America I am not able, I give you my solemn word, to furnish you. In the first place I have not that much at my disposal, and in the second, even if I had, it would be doing you the greatest wrong I can imagine to put into your hands the means of carrying out so rash and critical a venture. You would do me bitter injustice, Moritz Stiefel, if you saw in this refusal of mine any sign of failing affection. On the contrary, it would be the grossest failure in my duty as your friend and counselor for me to be willing to let your momentary loss of judgment cause me too to lose my head and blindly follow my first, most natural impulses. I am willing and ready, if you wish me to, to write to your parents and try to convince them that throughout the course of this last term you have done all you could and drawn so heavily upon your strength that a severe attitude towards what has happened to you would

not only be unwarranted but, more seriously, might have the gravest effect upon your mental and physical health.

Your implied threat that you will take your own life in case your flight is not made feasible has—to speak frankly, Moritz,—rather taken me aback. No matter how undeserved a misfortune may be, we should never let ourselves be driven to ignoble measures. The way in which you seem to wish to make me—who have never shown you anything but kindness—answerable for a possible shocking outrage on your part, might, to a person inclined to think evil, look very much like blackmail. I must confess that this mode of acting from you, who usually are so well aware of what a man owes himself, was the very last I should have expected. For the present, I cherish the firm conviction that you were still suffering too much from the first shock to be able to realize fully what you were doing.

And so I am confidently hoping that these words of mine will find you already in a more composed state of mind. Take the affair as it stands. To my way of thinking, it is wholly inadmissible that a young man should be judged by his school marks. We have too many examples of very bad scholars who have become remarkable men, and conversely of excellent scholars who have not distinguished themselves in life. In any case I assure you that so far as I am concerned your mishap will not cause any change in your relations with Melchior. It will always give me pleasure to see my son in the

company of a young man who—let the world judge of him as it will—deserved and won not only his but my most cordial sympathy.

And so—up with your chin, Moritz Stiefel! Such crises, of this kind or of that, come upon us all and must just be got over. If everyone so placed should snatch forthwith at dagger and poison, there might easily soon be no more men and women in the world. Let us hear from you soon again, and believe me cordially and steadfastly

Your maternal friend,

FANNY G.

CURTAIN

SCENE VI.—*The BERGMANN Garden in the radiance
of the morning sun.*

WENDLA—[*Discovered.*] Why have you stolen out of the house?—To look for violets!—Because mother sees me smiling.—And why can't you stop, and shut your lips tight any more?—I don't know.—Oh, I don't know—I can't find words. . . .

The path is like a plush carpet underfoot—not one little stone, not a thorn.—My feet don't touch the ground. . . . Oh, how I did sleep last night.

Here's where they used to be. [*Kneels.*] They make me feel as solemn as a nun at communion.—Dear violets!—All right, motherling! I'll put on my penitence-dress!—Oh, God, if somebody would only come whom I could hug and tell!

CURTAIN

SCENE VII.—*Twilight. The sky is lightly overcast. The path winds through low growth and sedge-grass. Not far away the river sounds. MORITZ sits facing the audience, his back to some bushes and the path.*

MORITZ—It is better so.—I don't fit in. Let them mount and climb upon each other's heads.—I will pull the door to behind me, and step into the open. I won't pay so much just to let myself be pushed around.

I didn't put myself forward. Why should I put myself forward now?—I have no compact with God. Let them distort the thing any way they have a mind to. I was pressed.—I don't say my parents are responsible. After all, they had to be prepared for the worst. They were old enough to know what they were doing. I was an infant when I came into the world—otherwise even I might have been cunning enough to become another person. Why should I pay the penalty for all the others' being there already!

I suppose I must have fallen on my head. . . . If anyone gives me a present of a mad dog, I give him his mad dog back; and if he won't take his mad dog back, then I am humane and . . .

Yes, I just must have fallen on my head!

One is born quite by accident, and yet, after the most mature consideration, one is not supposed to—— It's enough to make one shoot one's self dead!

At least the weather shows that it sympathizes. All day it's looked like rain, but it's still holding off.—A rare peace is brooding over nature: nowhere anything sharp or exciting; heaven and earth like a transparent spider's-web. And everything seems to feel so well. The landscape lovely as a lullaby—"Schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf' ein," as Fräulein Snandulia sang. Too bad she holds her elbows awkwardly!—It was at the feast of St. Cecilia I danced for the last time. Snandulia only dances at parties. Her silk dress was cut so low, back and front—behind down to the belt at her waist, and in front low enough to take away your wits.—She can't have had a chemise on. . . .

That would be something that might stop me yet!—More just for curiosity.—It must be an extraordinary sensation—a feeling as if one were being swept down a torrent—— I shan't tell anybody that I've come back with the thing undone. I shall act as if I had taken part in all that. . . . It's rather mortifying, to have been human and not got to know the most human thing of all.—You come from Egypt, my dear sir, and have not seen the pyramids?!

I don't want to cry again to-day. I don't want to think any more about my funeral—— Melchior will lay a wreath upon my casket; Pastor Kahl-

bauch will console my parents; old Sonnenstich will cite parallels from history.—A gravestone I probably won't get. I should have liked an urn of snowy marble on a black syenite base,—but, praise God, I shan't miss it! Memorials are for the living, not for the dead.

I should need a year to take leave of everything in my thoughts. I don't want to cry again. I am so happy that I can look back without bitterness. How many lovely evenings I have spent with Melchior!—under the river willows, at the forester's hut, on the highroad out there where the five lindens stand, up on castle hill among the peaceful ruins of Runenburg—— When the hour has come, I shall think with all my might of whipped cream. Whipped cream doesn't sustain you, but it's filling and it leaves a pleasant taste. . . . And I had thought mankind was infinitely worse. I haven't found a soul that wouldn't have wanted to do his best; and many a one I have pitied on my account.

I pass to the altar like the youth in ancient Etruria whose dying rattle buys his brothers' prosperity through the coming year.—One by one I go through all the mysterious shudders of deliverance. I gulp with sorrow at my fate.—Life has given me the cold shoulder. From up there I see grave, friendly looks beckon me: the headless queen, the headless queen—sympathy with soft arms awaiting me. . . . Your tenders are for children; I carry my free pass within myself. Sinks the shell, off sails the butterfly: the dream besets us no more.—You

should play no mad games with the fraud! The mist dissolves: life is a matter of taste. [*His shoulder is suddenly grabbed from behind by ILSE.*]

ILSE—[*In torn clothes, a gay kerchief round her head.*] What have you lost?

MORITZ—[*Starting to his feet.*] Ilse!

ILSE—What are you looking for here?

MORITZ—What d'you frighten me so for?

ILSE—What is it? What have you lost?

MORITZ—But why did you startle me so awfully?

ILSE—I've just come from the city.—I'm going home.

MORITZ—I don't know, what I've lost.

ILSE—Then it's no good your looking. [MORITZ swears.] It's four days since I was home.

MORITZ—Sneaking like a cat!

ILSE—That's 'cause I've got my dancing-slippers on.—Mother will make eyes!—Come along to the house with me!

MORITZ—Where have you been bumming around again?

ILSE—In P r i a p i a !

MORITZ—Priapia?

ILSE—At Nohl's, at Fehrendorf's, at Padinsky's, —with Lenz, Rank, Spühler,—with everybody you can think of!—Kling, kling,—s h e will jump!

MORITZ—Are they painting you?

ILSE—Fehrendorf's painting me as St. Stylites, standing on a Corinthian capital. Fehrendorf, I must tell you, is a mess.¹ Last time I stepped on

¹ Literally, a cut-up noodle.

one of his tubes. Squashed it. He wipes his brush on my hair. I give him one on the ear. He throws his palette at my head. I knock the easel over. He gets after me with the maulstick over couch and tables and chairs, all round the studio. Behind the stove lay a sketch! Be good, or I'll tear it!—He swore amnesty, and then for a finishing touch he kissed me—kissed me, oh, something terrible!

MORITZ—Where do you spend the night when you stay in town?

ILSE—Last night we were at Nohl's; night before at Boyokevitch's; Sunday with Oikonomopulos. At Padinsky's there was champagne. Valabregez had sold his "Man Sick with the Plague." Adolar drank out of the ash-tray. Lenz sang "The Murd'ress of Her Child," and Adolar played the guitar to pieces. I was so drunk they had to put me to bed.—You're still going to school all the time, Moritz?

MORITZ—No, no—this term, I'm getting out

ILSE—You're right. Oh, how the time flies when you're earning money!—D'you remember how we used to play robbers?—Wendla Bergmann and you and I and the rest, when you all came out in the evening and drank new, warm goat's milk at our house?—What's Wendla doing? I remember seeing her at the flood.—What's Melchi Gabor doing?—Does he still gaze so deeply into things?—In singing-lesson we used to stand opposite each other.

MORITZ—He philosophizes.

ILSE—Wendla came to see us a while ago, and brought mother some preserves. I was sitting that

day for Isidor Landauer. He's using me for Holy Mary, the Mother of God, with the Christ-child. He's a ninny, and disgusting. Whew! like a weather-cock!—Have you got a "morning after" headache?

MORITZ—From last night. We swilled like hippopotamuses. It was five o'clock when I staggered home.

ILSE—One only needs to look at you.—Were there girls there?

MORITZ—Arabella, the bar-maid,—a Spanish girl. The landlord left us all, the whole night through, alone with her.

ILSE—One only needs to look at you, Moritz.—I never have these morning-afters! Last Carnival I went for three days and three nights without getting into a bed, or even out of my clothes. From masquerade ball to café; noontimes at the Bellavista, evenings at the cabaret, nights to another ball! Lena was along, and fatty Viola.—The third night, Henry found me.

MORITZ—Had he been looking for you?

ILSE—He'd stumbled over my arm. I was lying senseless in the gutter-snow.—So then I joined up with him. For two weeks I never left his lodgings. That was a horrible time!—Mornings I had to throw on his Persian dressing-gown, and evenings walk about the room in a black page's costume—white lace at the collar, cuffs, and knees. Every day he'd photograph me in a new arrangement: one time on the back of the sofa, as Ariadne, another time as Leda, another as Ganymede, and once on all fours as a female

Nebuchadnezzar. And then he would rave about killing—about shooting, suicide, and charcoal fumes. Early mornings he'd bring a pistol into bed, load it full of cartridges and poke it into my breast: one wink, and I'll fire!—Oh, he would have fired, Moritz; he would have fired!—Then he'd stick the thing in his mouth like a bean-shooter. Maybe that would wake my instinct for self-preservation! And then—Brrr! the bullet would have gone through my spine.

MORITZ—Is Henry still alive?

ILSE—How do I know?—Over the bed was a mirror let into the ceiling. The little room looked tower-high and bright as an opera-house. You saw yourself actually hanging downwards from the sky. I had the most frightful dreams at night.—God, O God, when would it be day again!—Good night, Ilse. When you sleep you're beautiful for murder!

MORITZ—Is this Henry still alive?

ILSE—God willing, no!—One day when he went to get some absinthe I threw my cloak on and slipped out onto the street. The Carnival was over. The police snapped me up. What was I after in men's clothes?—They took me to headquarters, and there came Nohl, Fehrendorf, Padinsky, Spühler, Oikonomopulos, the whole Priapia, and bailed me out. In a cab they transported me to Adolar's studio. Ever since I've been true to the gang. Fehrendorf is a monkey, Nohl is a pig, Boyokevitch an owl, Loison a hyena, Oikonomopulos a camel—but that's why I love them one and all the same, and don't care

to tie up to anyone else, though the world were full of archangels and millionaires!

MORITZ—I must go back, Ilse.

ILSE—Come with me as far as our house.

MORITZ—What for?—What for?

ILSE—[*Kidding him.*] To drink fresh, warm goat's milk!—I'll singe your forelock and hang a little bell around your neck. And we still have a rocking-horse that you can play with.

MORITZ—I must get back. I still have the Sassanids, the Sermon on the Mount and the paralelepipedon on my conscience.—Good night, Ilse.

ILSE—Sweet dreams!—Do you ever go down to the wigwam any more, where Melchi Gabor buried my tomahawk?—Brrr! Before you catch on, I'll lie in the dust-bin! [*She hurries off.*]

MORITZ—One word, it would have cost.—[*Calls.*] Ilse!—Ilse!— Praise God, she doesn't hear!

—I am not in the mood.—For that, one needs a clear head and a joyful heart.—Too bad, too bad the chance is lost!

. . . I shall say that I have had huge crystal mirrors over my beds—and have trained an unruly filly—and made her prance before me across the carpet in long black silk stockings and patent-leather shoes, and long black kid gloves and black velvet around her neck;—and how I stifled her in my pillows, in an access of madness. . . . I shall smile when the talk is of lust. . . . I shall—

scream!—I shall scream!—Oh to be you, Ilse!—Priapia!—Unconscious—

ness!—That takes away my power!
 —This favorite of fortune, this
 sunny creature, this daughter of
 joy upon my dolorous path!—Oh!
 —Oh!

*[He staggers across the path and falls under the
 high, dark, cavernous bushes on the further side,
 crawling towards the river.]*

* * * * *

So have I found it again without trying, the grassy
 bank? The mulleins seem to have grown since yester-
 day. The vista between the willows is the same still.
 The river is flowing heavily like melted lead. Don't
 let me forget. . . . *[He draws MRS. GABOR's letter
 from his pocket, lights a match, and burns it.]*—
 How the sparks fly—back and forth—up and down!
 —Souls!—Shooting stars!—

Before I lit the match you could still see the
 grasses and a strip of the horizon.—Now it's gotten
 dark. Now I'm not going home any more.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Faculty Room. Two small, high windows, one of them walled up. Portraits of Pestalozzi and J. J. Rousseau on the walls. Long, narrow, green table, with a gaspipe and six flaring burners over it. At one end, on a platform, PRINCIPAL SONNENSTICH¹ sits. Behind the table sit, quite close together, in a grotesque row, PROFESSORS AFFENSCHMALZ (nearest SONNENSTICH), KNOCHENBRUCH, FLIEGENTOD, HUNGERGURT, ZUNGENSCHLAG, and KNÜPFEL-DICK. HABEBALD, the beadle or proctor of the school, cowers near the door.*

SONNENSTICH—May one of the gentlemen perhaps have something further to remark?—Gentlemen!—If we find ourselves unable to avoid the necessity of moving the rustication of our crime-laden pupil before a superior Board of Education, it is for the very weightiest reasons that we cannot help it. We cannot if only to do our best to atone for the misfortune that has already burst upon us; still less if we would insure our institution for the future against further calamities of the same order. We cannot if we are to discipline our crime-laden pupil for the demoraliz-

¹ Sonnenstich means sunstroke: one pictures a round, red face enringed with bristling gray hair, and an explosive manner.

ing influence that he has exerted upon his classmates ; we cannot, most conclusively, if so we may prevent him from exerting the like influence upon the remainder of his classmates. We are compelled to it—and this, gentlemen, is perhaps the most fundamental ground of all, against which no protest can prevail,—because it is for us to protect our institution from the ravages of a suicide-epidemic, such as has already broken out at various schools like ours and has so far defied all efforts to attach the schoolboy to those conditions of existence best adapted to his education into cultivated manhood.—May one of the gentlemen still have something to remark?

KNÜPPELDICK—[*Furthest away; middle-aged.*] I can no longer repel the conviction that it may at last be about time to open a window somewhere.

ZUNGENSCHLAG—[*Next him, bearded, choleric.*] There—there prevails here an at-at-atmosphere like that in subterranean cata-catacombs, like tha-tha—that in the archive-repositories of the quo-quondam star-chamber tribunal at We-Wetzlar!

SONNENSTICH—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Open a window. We have, Heaven be praised, atmosphere enough out-of-doors.—May one of the gentlemen have anything further to remark?

FLIEGENTOD—[*The Secretary, with the minute-book; bearded, ponderous.*] If my worthy colleagues wish to have a window opened, I have nothing, personally, to object against it; only might I ask that

they will not wish to have that window opened which is directly at my back?

SONNENSTICH—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Open the other window!—May one of the gentlemen have something still further to remark?

HUNGERGURT—[*Small, mild, spectacled; between FLIEGENTOD and ZUNGENSCHLAG.*] Without any wish on my part to aggravate the controversy, might I recall the fact that the other window has been walled up since the autumn holidays?

SONNENSTICH—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Leave the other window closed!—I see myself compelled, gentlemen, to bring the matter to a vote. I request those colleagues who are for opening the only window that can enter into the question, to indicate it by standing. [*The three furthest from him stand.*] One, two three. [*Counting the seated ones, too.*] One, two, three. Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Leave the one window likewise closed.—I for my part am of the opinion that our atmosphere leaves nothing to be desired!—May one of the gentlemen still have something to remark?—Gentlemen!—Let us make the supposition that we omit to move the rustication of our crime-laden pupil before a superior Board of Education. We will then be held accountable, by the Ministry of Education, for the disaster that has befallen us. Of

the various schools that have been visited by this suicide-epidemic, those in which twenty-five per cent of the pupils have fallen victims to the ravages of the suicide-epidemic have been temporarily closed by the Ministry of Education. To preserve our Institution from this most staggering blow is our duty, as the guardians and safekeepers of our institution. It grieves us deeply, gentlemen and colleagues, that we are in no position to let our crime-laden pupil's qualifications in other respects count as mitigating circumstances. A mild procedure, which might be justifiable towards our crime-laden pupil singly, is at this time, when the very existence of our institution is imperilled in the most dangerous manner conceivable, certainly not justifiable! We see ourselves reduced to the necessity of passing judgment on the guilty lest we, the innocent, be judged.—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Bring him up. [HABEBALD goes out.]

ZUNGENSCHLAG—If it is settled that the pre-pre-vailing a-a-a-atmosphere leaves little or nothing to be desired, I should like to move that during the summer vacation the other window as well should be-be-be-be-be-be-be be walled up!

FLIEGENTOD—If our dear colleague Zungenschlag does not find our sanctum satisfactorily ventilated, I should like to set the machinery in motion toward having a ventilator installed in our dear colleague Zungenschlag's high and cavernous brow.

ZUNGENSCHLAG—Th-th-that is too much for me

to put up with!—Ru-rudenesses are more than I need to put up with!—I am in possession of my five senses. . . . !

SONNENSTICH—I must request our colleagues, Messrs. Fliegendod and Zungenschlag, to preserve decorum. I think I hear our crime-laden pupil already on the stairs. [*HABEBALD opens the door, whereupon MELCHIOR, pale but composed, steps before the assemblage.*] Step up nearer to the table. —When Mr. Stiefel had been informed of his son's impious and wicked act, he searched in his grief and perplexity among the effects that his son Moritz had left behind him, in hopes that so he might happen to find the moving cause of that abominable outrage. So doing, he stumbled, in an irrelevant place, upon a piece of writing which, without yet making the abominable outrage understandable in itself, yet offers, I regret to say, an explanation only too conclusive of the moral obliquity in the criminal which must have underlain his act. I am speaking of a twenty-page treatise in dialogue form entitled "Coition," accompanied by life-size drawings, rank with the most shameless obscenities, and responding to the most perverted demands that a depraved debauchee could possibly make upon lascivious literature——

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—You have to keep quiet. —Mr. Stiefel handed this manuscript over to us, and we promised the distracted father at any cost to identify its author. The handwriting was accordingly compared with the hands of each one of the dead prof-

ligate's schoolmates, and it proved, in the unanimous judgment of the whole faculty and in perfect accord with the specialist's opinion of our esteemed colleague in calligraphy, to have the closest conceivable similarity to yours——

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—You have to keep quiet.—Notwithstanding the crushing fact that this resemblance has been marked by unimpeachable authorities, we believe that we may refrain for the moment from taking any further steps till we have first circumstantially interrogated the guilty student concerning his crime against morals, in conjunction with the instigation to self-murder arising from it, with which he is accordingly charged.

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—You have to answer to the particular questions which I shall put to you, in order, one after the other, with a simple, modest “Yes” or “No.”—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—The documents!—I trust that our Secretary, Mr. Fliegentod, will from now on record the proceedings as nearly verbatim as possible. [To MELCHIOR.] Do you recognize this manuscript?

MELCHIOR—Yes.

SONNENSTICH—Do you know what this manuscript contains?

MELCHIOR—Yes.

SONNENSTICH—Is the writing in this manuscript yours?

MELCHIOR—Yes.

SONNENSTICH—Does this obscene manuscript originate from you?

MELCHIOR—Yes.—I beg you, Mr. Sonnenstich, to show me one obscenity in it.

SONNENSTICH—You are to answer the particular questions I put to you with a simple, modest “Yes” or “No”!

MELCHIOR—I have written no more and no less than what is very well known to you to be fact.

SONNENSTICH—Insolence.

MELCHIOR—I ask you to show me one offense against morals in that paper!

SONNENSTICH—Do you imagine I’d have a mind to act the clown for you? Habebald! . . .

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—You have as little respect for the dignity of your assembled teachers as you have decent sensibility for mankind’s inbred feeling for the modesty of the shamefastness of the moral order of the world!—Habebald!

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—It’s in fact the Langenscheidt for the learning in three hours of agglutinative Vo-lapük!¹

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—I instruct our Secretary, Mr. Fliegentod, to close the minutes!

¹ This sentence, in the lack of any authentic stage-direction, remains dark. “The Langenscheidt” is evidently a book, but why is it here suddenly referred to, or what is done with it?

MELCHIOR—I have——

SONNENSTICH—You have to keep quiet!—Habe-
bald.

HABEBALD—Yes, Mr. Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH—Take him down!

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*A graveyard seen through pouring rain.*

Gray stone wall about five feet high, and quite close to it, parallel with it, an open grave, behind which stands PASTOR KAHLBAUCH, umbrella in left hand and prayer-book in right, flanked by MORITZ's father, his friend ZIEGENMELKER, and UNCLE PROBST, on the right, and PRINCIPAL SONNENSTICH and PROFESSOR KNOCHENBRUCH, with a string of schoolboys, on the left. At a little distance, by a half-collapsed monument, are ILSE and MARTHA.

PASTOR KAHLBAUCH—. . . For he who rejects the mercy wherewith the Eternal Father has blest man born in sin, he shall die a spiritual death. He who in wilful, carnal denial of God's proper honor liveth for evil and serveth it, he shall die the death of the body. He, however, who wantonly throws from him the cross which the All-merciful has laid upon him for his sins, verily, verily, I say unto you, he will die the everlasting death!—[*He closes the book and puts it in his pocket, takes a shovel from the wall-face and with it pushes some mud into the grave, and hands the shovel to MR. STIEFEL.*]—Let us, however, faithful pilgrims upon the thorny way, praise the Lord, the All-bountiful, and render him thanks for his inscrutable elections. For as truly

as this soul did die a threefold death, so truly will God the Lord induct the righteous man into bliss and the Life Everlasting.—Amen.

MR. STIEFEL—[*His voice thick with tears.*] The boy was none of mine!—The boy was none of mine!—The boy never pleased me from childhood up! [*He throws a shovelful of mud into the grave, and gives the shovel back.* PASTOR KAHLBAUCH hands it to PROFESSOR SONNENSTICH.]

SONNENSTICH—[*Throws a shovelful of mud into the grave.*] Self-murder as the most serious conceivable offense against the moral order of the world is the most perfect conceivable demonstration of the moral order of the world, in that the suicide relieves the moral order of the world from passing judgment upon him, and establishes its existence. [*He passes the shovel to PROFESSOR KNOCHENBRUCH.*]

PROF. KNOCHENBRUCH—[*Throws a shovelful of mud into the grave.*] Defective—depraved—delinquent—decayed—and detrited! [*He walks around the grave and hands the shovel to UNCLE PROBST.*]

UNCLE PROBST—[*Throws a shovelful of mud into the grave.*] Not from my very mother would I have believed a child could act so basely toward his parents! [*Hands the shovel to ZIEGENMELKER.*]

ZIEGENMELKER—[*Throws a shovelful of mud into the grave.*] Toward a father who for twenty years now has had no thought, early or late, but for his child's welfare! [*Puts the shovel back against the wall.*]

PASTOR KAHLBAUCH—[*Pressing MR. STIEFEL'S*

hand.] We know that for them that love God all things work together for good. 1 Corinth. 12, 15.—Think of the sorrowing mother, and strive by redoubled love to make up to her for her loss. [*He squeezes out past the Professors and boys.*]

SONNENSTICH—[*Pressing MR. STIEFEL's hand.*] We would probably not have been able to promote him, anyway. [*STIEFEL passes him.*]

KNOCHENBRUCH — [*Pressing MR. STIEFEL's hand.*] And if we had promoted him, next spring he would most assuredly have failed to pass.

UNCLE PROBST—[*Coming round in front, and pressing STIEFEL's hand.*] Now your first duty is to think of yourself. You're the father of a family! . . .

ZIEGENMELKER—[*Doing likewise.*] Rely on me. I'll steer you!—Beastly weather! enough to make one's guts crawl. Whoever doesn't get after that right away with a stiff drink 'll be taken off with heart-failure! [*Leads him toward PASTOR KAHLBAUCH.*]

MR. STIEFEL—[*Blowing his nose.*] The boy was none of mine. . . . The boy was none of mine. . . . [*KAHLBAUCH takes his other arm. All the men pass off.—The rain lets up. HANSY RILOW slips in behind the grave.*]

HANSY RILOW—[*Throwing in a shovelful of mud.*] Rest in peace, old fellow!—Greet my immortal brides from me, immolated memories; and commend me most humbly to the dear Lord's mercy—poor dumbbell you!—They'll put up a scarecrow on your

grave here yet, in memory of your angel simplicity. . . .

GEORGE—Has the pistol been found?

ROBERT—No one need hunt for a pistol!

ERNEST—Did you see him, Robert?

ROBERT—A God-damned swindle, I call it.—Who did see him?—Who!

OTTO—Yeah, that's the sore point!—They'd thrown a cloth over him.

GEORGE—Was his tongue hanging out?

ROBERT—His eyes!—That's why they'd thrown the cloth over.

OTTO—[*Shuddering.*] Grrr!

HANSY—Do you know for sure that he hanged himself?

ERNEST—I've heard that his whole head was gone.

OTTO—Nonsense! Rot!

ROBERT—Why, I've had the noose in my hands!—I never saw a hanged body yet that you wouldn't have covered up.

GEORGE—He couldn't have taken his leave in a vulgarer way.

HANSY—What the devil,—hanging is said to be quite handsome!

OTTO—I've got five marks still owing me from him. We had a bet. He swore he'd keep his place.

HANSY—It's your fault that he's lying there. You called him a boaster.

OTTO—Poppycock! I've got to grind thru the nights, too. If he'd learned the history of ancient

Greek literature, he wouldn't have had to hang himself! [*Turns to go.*]

ERNEST—Have you done your composition, Otto?

OTTO—Just the introduction.

ERNEST—I haven't the least idea what to write.

GEORGE—What, weren't you there when Affenschmalz gave us the choice of subject?

HANSY—I'm going to fake up something out of Democritus.

ERNEST—I want to see if Meyer's Abridged has anything left I can use.

OTTO—[*As all disappear.*] Have you done your Virgil for to-morrow?—[*When they are gone, MARTHA and ILSE come to the grave.*]

ILSE—Quick! quick!—There come the grave-diggers off there.

MARTHA—Hadn't we better wait, Ilse?

ILSE—What for?—We'll bring new ones, and more, and more!—There are enough growing.

MARTHA—You're right, Ilse!—[*She throws an ivy-wreath into the grave. ILSE opens her apron and lets a shower of fresh anemones rain upon the coffin.*].—I'll dig up our roses. What if I am beaten for it?—Here they'll bloom well.

ILSE—I will water them as often as I go past. I'll bring forget-me-nots over from the brook, and irises from the house.

MARTHA—It ought to be glorious!—glorious!

ILSE—I was just over the bridge up there when I heard the shot.

MARTHA—Poor heart!

ILSE—And I know the reason too, Martha.

MARTHA—Did he tell you something?

ILSE—Parallelepipedon!—But don't tell anybody.

MARTHA—I won't.—There's my hand.

ILSE—Here is the pistol.

MARTHA—That's why it couldn't be found!

ILSE—I took it right out of his hand when I went past in the morning.

MARTHA—Give it to me, Ilse!—Please, give it to me!

ILSE—No, I'm going to keep it for remembrance.

MARTHA—Is it true, Ilse, that he's lying in there without a head?

ILSE—He must have loaded it with water!—The mulleins were spattered all over with blood. His brains hung round on the osiers.

CURTAIN

SCENE III.—MR. *and* MRS. GABOR *face each other,*
the window between them, lighting them.

MRS. GABOR—. . . They were in need of a scape-goat. They couldn't disregard the accusations that were springing up on every side against them. And now that my son has had the ill luck to fall foul of the old pedants at the precise moment, now am I, his own mother, to help to complete his executioners' work?—God preserve me from it!

MR. GABOR—I have looked on at your ingenious educational methods for fourteen years in silence. They were contrary to my ideas. I had always lived under the persuasion that a child was not a play-thing, that a child had a claim upon our most earnest efforts. But I said to myself, if the grace and esprit of one parent are able to take the place of the other's serious principles, why, they may be preferable to the serious principles.—I am not blaming you, Fanny; but don't stand in my way when I am trying to make good to the boy the wrong that both you and I have done him.

MRS. GABOR—I will stand in your way as long as a drop of blood runs warm in my veins! In a House of Correction my child will be lost. A criminal nature may perhaps be bettered in such institutions.—I don't know. A child naturally good will there as

certainly become criminal as a plant degenerates when deprived of air and sun. I am conscious of no wrong done him. I thank God to-day as always that He showed me the way to awaken in my child an upright character and noble mind. What has he done then that's so dreadful?—I haven't the least idea of trying to exculpate him!—For being turned out of school he needs no exculpation; and if he were at fault, he has paid for it.—You may know better about all that; you may be perfectly right theoretically. But I cannot let my only child be driven and forced to his destruction!

MR. GABOR—That does not depend upon us, Fanny. That is a risk that we took upon ourselves along with our happiness. He that is too feeble for the march is left by the wayside. And it is surely not so bad as it might be, if the inevitable comes in time. May Heaven defend us from it! Our duty is to steady the waverer as long as reason can find means to do it.—That he has been expelled from school is not his fault. If he had not been expelled from school, that wouldn't have been his fault, either.—You take things too lightly. You see only inquisitive trifling where fundamental lesions of character are really involved. You women are not qualified to judge such things. Anyone who can write what Melchior writes must be degenerate at the innermost core of his being. His essence is tainted. No nature that's half-way healthy permits itself that sort of thing. We are all of us flesh and blood: every one of us strays from the strict, true path.

But what he has written represents a principle. What he has written is no chance, casual slip, but documentary proof, of ghastly clarity, of that frankly affected purpose, that natural propensity, that bent toward the immoral because it is immoral!—it manifests that exceptional spiritual corruption that we jurists designate as moral imbecility.—Whether his condition can be in any way remedied, I am not able to say. If we would retain one glimmer of hope,—and, before all, consciences as his parents free from remorse,—we must apply ourselves with decision and in all earnestness to the task.—Let us cease contention, Fanny! I am sensible how hard for you it is. I know you idolize him, because he suits so perfectly your gifted temperament. But be stronger than yourself. Show yourself for once at last unselfish toward your son!

MRS. GABOR—God help me, how can I prevail against that!—One must be a man, to be able to say such things! One must be a man to let oneself be so blinded by the dead letter! One must be a man to close his eyes to what stares him in the face!—I have acted toward Melchior conscientiously and carefully from the first day I found him susceptible to impressions from his environment. Are we responsible for a c c i d e n t? You may be struck down to-morrow by a falling tile, and along will come your friend, your father, and instead of tending your wounds set his foot upon your head!—I will not let my child be ruined before my very eyes! Would I be his mother if I did?—It is unthinkable!

It is utterly out of the question. What in the world did he write then, after all? Isn't it the most blatant proof of his innocence, of his ignorance, of his childish immaturity, that he can write such things?—You can have no inkling of knowledge of human nature, you must be an utterly soulless bureaucrat, or unbelievably narrow, to smell out moral corruption here!—Say what you like: if you put Melchior in the House of Correction, we must separate—and then let me see if nowhere in the world I can find help and means to snatch my child from his downfall!

MR. GABOR—You will have to reconcile yourself to it—if not to-day, to-morrow. To discount misfortune comes hard to everybody. I will stand by you, and when your courage threatens to fail I will spare no pains, no sacrifice, to ease your heart. I see the future so lowering, so gloomy,—it only lacked that you too should yet be lost to me.

MRS. GABOR—I shall never see him again; I shall never see him again. He will never stand the degradation, he will never come to terms with filth. He will break the constraint put on him: the terrible example is fresh before his eyes.—And if I do see him again—O God, O God!—that happy, spring-like heart, his ringing laugh,—everything, everything,—his child-like resolution to battle manfully for right and good,—oh, that unspoiled spirit like the morning sky, as I have cherished it in him, clear and pure, as my highest good . . .—Hold me to account, if the wrong cries for reparation! Hold me to account! Do what you will with me! I bear

the blame!—But keep your fearful hands off the child!

MR. GABOR—It is he who has gone wrong.

MRS. GABOR—He has not gone wrong!

MR. GABOR—He has gone wrong!—I would have given anything to have spared your boundless love this!—A woman came to me this morning distracted, scarcely able to speak, with this letter in her hand—a letter to her fifteen-year-old daughter.¹ She had opened it, she said, from simple curiosity; the child was not at home.—In this letter Melchior explains to the fifteen-year-old girl that his treatment of her leaves him no peace, that he has sinned against her, etc., etc., and will naturally take the responsibility for everything. She is not to worry, even if she should feel consequences. He is already on the way to procure help—his expulsion will make that easier for him. The misstep they have made may yet lead to her happiness—and what more senseless twaddle you please!

MRS. GABOR—Impossible!

MR. GABOR—The letter is forged. It's a case of imposture. Someone is trying to turn his notorious expulsion to account. I have not yet spoken with the lad—but just look at the hand! Look at the writing!

¹ Note Wedekind's subtlety: Mr. Gabor doesn't remember Wendlä's precise age, and makes her as old as he can, to minimize Melchior's transgression,—well before the days of Freud.

MRS. GABOR—An unheard-of, shameless piece of knavery!

MR. GABOR—[*With double meaning.*] I fear so.

MRS. GABOR—No! No! Never in the world!

MR. GABOR—All the better for us, then.—The woman asked me, wringing her hands, what she ought to do. I told her she ought not to let her fifteen-year-old daughter scramble around haylofts. The letter she fortunately left with me.—Now if we send Melchior to another school where he won't even be under p a r e n t a l supervision, we shall have the same thing happening in three weeks—a new expulsion—his joyous, spring-like heart will get accustomed to them by degrees.—Tell me, Fanny, where a m I to put the lad?

MRS. GABOR—In the House of Correction——

MR. GABOR—In the . . . ?

MRS. GABOR—. . . House of Correction!

MR. GABOR—He will find there, first of all, what was wrongfully withheld from him at home: iron discipline, fundamental principles, and a moral restraint to which he will have to submit under all circumstances.—And I may add that the House of Correction is not the abode of horror you imagine from the name. Chief weight there is laid upon the development of Christian thought and feeling. The lad will there, at last, learn to aim at what's good, not what's i n t e r e s t i n g, and in his actions take account not of his natural impulses but of the law.—Half an hour ago I received a telegram from my brother which, I think, confirms what the woman

told me. Melchior has confided in him and asked him for two hundred marks with which to fly to England. . . .

MRS. GABOR — [*Covers her face.*] Merciful Heaven!

CURTAIN

SCENE IV.—*The House of Correction. The setting may be the same as for the Faculty Room, without any pictures or furniture.*

MELCHIOR is shown in company with
DIETHELM, REINHOLD, RUPRECHT, HELMUTH,
and GASTON.

DIETHELM—Here's a twenty-pfennig piece.

REINHOLD—What's that for?

DIETHELM—I'll put it on the floor. You get in a circle round it. Whoever hits it, gets it.

RUPRECHT—Aren't you in on this too, Melchior?

MELCHIOR—No, thank you.

HELMUTH—The Joseph!

GASTON—He can't any more. He's here to recover his health.

MELCHIOR—[*To himself.*] It isn't wise for me to stay out. Everyone keeps an eye on me. I must join in—or my creature will go to the devil.—The confinement makes them abuse themselves.—I may break my neck: I'll be glad. I may get away: I'll be glad too. I can only gain, either way.—Ruprecht is getting to be my friend: he knows all about things here. I'll treat him to the chapters of Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar, of Moab, of Lot and his daughters, of Queen Vashti and of Abishag

the Shunammite.—He's got the sorriest face in the lot!

RUPRECHT—I'm getting it!

HELMUTH—It'll come yet!

GASTON—Day after to-morrow, maybe!

HELMUTH—Now!—Look!—O God, O God! . . .

ALL—Summa—summa cum laude!!

RUPRECHT—[*Picking up the coin.*] Many thanks.

HELMUTH—Come here with that, you!

RUPRECHT—Dirty beast!

HELMUTH—Jail-bird!

RUPRECHT—[*Strikes him in the face.*] There! [Runs away.]

HELMUTH—[*Running after him.*] I'll kill you!

THE REST—[*Rushing after them.*] Get after him! Hustle! Hey! Hey! Hey!

MELCHIOR—[*Alone, looking at the window.*] There's where the lightning-rod goes down. You must wind a handkerchief round it.—When I think of her the blood always shoots to my head. And Moritz weighs on me like lead.—I'll go to a newspaper office: pay me by the hundred, I'll sell papers—collect news—write—local—ethical—psychophysical. . . . It's no longer so easy to starve:—lunch-wagons, soft-drink places.—The house is sixty feet high and the stucco is crumbly. . . . She hates me—she hates me because I've robbed her of her freedom. No matter how I act, it remains—rape.—All I can do is to hope, gradually, in the course of years . . .—In a week it'll be new moon.

To-morrow I'll grease the hinges. By Saturday at the latest I must know who has the key.—Sunday evening at prayers, a cataleptic fit—please God no one else gets sick!—Everything lies as clearly as if it had happened before me. I can get over the window-sill easily—a swing—a grip—but one must wrap a handkerchief around it.—There comes the Head Inquisitor. [*He goes off. DR. PROKRUSTES and a LOCKSMITH enter on the other side.*]

DR. PROKRUSTES—. . . It's true the windows are in the third story and nettles are planted underneath; but what does degeneracy care for nettles?—Last winter one climbed out of a skylight on us, and we had all the fuss of picking up and carting away and burying. . . .

THE LOCKSMITH—Do you want the grating of wrought iron?

DR. PROKRUSTES—Wrought iron—and since it can't be set in, riveted.

CURTAIN

SCENE V.—WENDLA'S room. WENDLA *in bed*. MRS. BERGMANN *at its foot*. INA *leaning at the window*. DR. VON BRAUSEPULVER *discoursing*.

DR. VON BRAUSEPULVER—How old are you exactly?

WENDLA—Fourteen and a half.

DR. VON BRAUSEPULVER—I have been prescribing Blaud's pills for fifteen years, and in a great many cases have observed the most inspiring improvement. I prefer them to cod-liver oil or tonics with iron. Begin with three to four pills per day, and increase the quantity as fast as you can assimilate it. I had prescribed for the Baroness Elfriede von Witzleben an increase of one pill every third day. The Baroness misunderstood me and increased the dose three pills each day. In less than three weeks the Baroness was able to go to Pyrmont with her lady mother to complete the cure. Tiring walks and extra meals we can dispense with. Instead, promise me, my dear, that you will try to move about all the more energetically, and not be ashamed to ask for nourishment as soon as your appetite reappears. Then these oppressed feelings round the heart will soon pass off—and the headache, the chills, the dizziness—and our terrible bil-

ious attacks. Baroness Elfriede von Witzleben within a week of beginning the cure was enjoying a whole broiled chicken with baked new potatoes for breakfast.

MRS. BERGMANN—May I offer you a glass of wine, Doctor?

DR. VON BRAUSEPULVER—Thank you, dear Mrs. Bergmann, my carriage is waiting. Don't take it so much to heart. In a few weeks our dear little patient will be as fresh and lively again as a gazelle,—be sure of it!—Good day, Mrs. Bergmann. Good day, my dear. Good day, ladies. Good day. [*He goes, accompanied by Mrs. BERGMANN.*]

INA—[*At the window.*] Well, your plane-tree is turning already—quite gay again. Can you see it from your bed?—A brief display, hardly worth being glad about, as one watches it come and go.—I must be going soon now, too. August will be waiting for me at the post office, and I must see the dressmaker first. Mucki is getting his first little trousers, and Karl is to have some new leggings for the winter.

WENDLA—Often I feel so happy, Ina!—all gladness and sunshine. I wouldn't have dreamed that anyone could feel so blissful round the heart. I want to go out and walk across the meadows in the evening glow and hunt for primroses along the river, and sit down at the bank and dream. . . . And then comes the toothache, and I think I must be going to die first thing in the morning: I get hot and cold, everything goes black before my eyes, and then the uncanny thing flutters in me.—Every time I wake

up I see mother crying. Oh, that hurts me so—I can't tell you, Ina!

INA—Hadn't I better lift your pillow higher?

MRS. BERGMANN—[*Coming back.*] He thinks the nausea will get better too; and then you can just quietly get up again. . . . It's my belief too that it'll be better if you get up again soon, Wendla.

INA—By the next time I drop in, perhaps you'll be dancing round the house again.—Good-bye, mother. I've just got to get to the dressmaker's. God keep you, Wendla dear. [*Kisses her.*] Get better very, very soon.

WENDLA—Good-bye, Ina.—Bring me some prim-roses when you come again. Good-bye. Kiss your youngster for me. . . . [INA *goes.*]—What else did he say, mother, when he was out there?

MRS. BERGMANN—He didn't say anything. He said the Baroness von Witzleben was also subject to fainting-spells. It was almost always that way with chlorosis.

WENDLA—Did he say, mother, that I had chlorosis?

MRS. BERGMANN—You're to drink milk and eat meat and vegetables when your appetite has come back.

WENDLA—Oh, mother, mother, I don't believe I have chlorosis! . . .

MRS. BERGMANN—You have chlorosis, child. Lie still, Wendla, lie still. You have chlorosis.

WENDLA—No, mother, no! I know I haven't!

I feel it! I haven't got chlorosis—I've got the dropsy. . . .

MRS. BERGMANN—You have chlorosis. Yes, he did say you had chlorosis. Quiet down, girlie. It will get better.

WENDLA—It won't get better. I have the dropsy. I must die, mother.—Oh, mother, I must die!

MRS. BERGMANN—You must not die, child! You must not die! . . . Merciful Heaven, you must not die!

WENDLA—But why do you cry, then, so miserably?

MRS. BERGMANN—You must not die—child! You haven't got dropsy. You have a b a b y, girl! You have a baby!—Oh, why, why did you do that to me?

WENDLA—I didn't do anything—

MRS. BERGMANN—Oh, don't deny it now, Wendla! —I know, I know. See, I couldn't have said a word to you,—Wendla, my Wendla! . . .

WENDLA—But that is quite impossible, mother! I'm not married!

MRS. BERGMANN—Great God, that's just it—that you're not married! That is just the frightful thing about it!—Wendla, Wendla, Wendla, what did you do!

WENDLA—Why, really, I don't remember any more! We were lying in the hay. . . . I haven't loved a soul in the world but you—only you, mother.

MRS. BERGMANN—My darling—

WENDLA—Oh, mother, why didn't you tell me everything?

MRS. BERGMANN—Child, child, let's not make each other's hearts still heavier. Control yourself! Don't despair, my child!—What, tell that to a fourteen-year-old girl? Why, I should sooner have expected the sun to go out! I haven't done anything different with you than my dear good mother did with me.—Oh, let us trust in the good God, Wendla; let us hope for pity, and bear our lot! See, there's still time: nothing has happened yet, child; and if we just don't get cowardly now, the good God won't forsake us either.—Be brave, Wendla, be brave!—One may be sitting at the window so with her hands in her lap, because so far everything has turned out good,—and then something bursts in on her and makes her heart feel like breaking on the spot. . . . Wha-what are you trembling for?

WENDLA—Somebody knocked.

MRS. BERGMANN—I didn't hear anything, dear heart. [*Goes to the door and opens it.*]

WENDLA—Oh, I heard it very clearly.—Who is outside?

MRS. BERGMANN—No one.—Schmidt's mother from Garden Street.—You come just right, Mother Schmidtin.

CURTAIN

SCENE VI.—*Vintagers, men and women, are in the Vineyard. In the west the sun is sinking behind the mountain peaks. A clear sound of bells comes up from the valley.—At the uppermost vine-trellis, under the overhanging cliffs, HANSY RILOW and ERNEST ROEBEL sprawl in the drying grass.*

ERNEST—I have overworked.

HANSY—Let's not be sad.—Too bad how the minutes fly.

ERNEST—You see them hanging and can no more—and to-morrow they'll be pressed.

HANSY—Being tired is as unbearable to me as being hungry.

ERNEST—Oh, I can no more!

HANSY—Just this one shining muscatel!

ERNEST—There's a limit to my elasticity.

HANSY—If I bend the spray, it'll swing back and forth between our mouths. We'll neither of us have to stir—just bite off the grapes and let the stalk spring back to the vine.

ERNEST—One no sooner resolves on something than lo! the strength that had vanished is renewed in him again.

HANSY—And add the flaming firmament—and the

evening bells,—my hopes for the future rise scarcely higher than this.

ERNEST—I often see myself as a Reverend Pastor already, with a genial, motherly housewife, a voluminous library, and offices and honors everywhere. Six days you have, to ruminate, and on the seventh you open your mouth. When you go walking, school-children take your hand, and when you come home the coffee is steaming, the cakes are brought in, and thru the garden door the girls come up with apples.—Can you imagine anything happier?

HANSY—I have visions of half-shut lashes, half-opened lips, and Turkish draperies.—I don't believe in pathos. You see, our elders pull long faces to cover their stupidities from us. Among themselves they call each other blockheads as we do. I know that.—When I'm a millionaire, I'll set up a memorial to dear God.—Think of the future as a milk pudding with sugar and spice. One fellow upsets it and bawls. Another stirs it all up in a mess and toils. Why not skim it?—or don't you believe that that art can be learned?

ERNEST—Let us skim!

HANSY—What's left 'll be chicken-feed.—I've pulled my head out of so many nooses now already. . . .

ERNEST—Let us skim, Hansy!—Why do you laugh?

HANSY—Are you beginning again already?

ERNEST—One of us has got to begin.

HANSY—When we think back thirty years hence

to an evening such as this, it may seem to us beautiful beyond words.

ERNEST—And how beautiful everything is, now, quite of itself!

HANSY—So why not?

ERNEST—If one happened to be alone, one might even weep.

HANSY—Don't let us be sad. [*Kisses him on the mouth.*]

ERNEST—[*Returning the kiss.*] I left the house with the idea of just merely speaking to you and going back again.

HANSY—I was expecting you.—Virtue isn't a bad clothing, but it belongs on imposing figures.

ERNEST—It still hangs loose around our limbs. I should have been uneasy if I hadn't found you.—I love you, Hansy, as I've never loved a living soul. . . .

HANSY—Let's not be sad.—When we think back, thirty years hence,—why, we may laugh at ourselves!—And now it is all so beautiful! The mountains are glowing, the grapes droop into our mouths, and the evening breeze whispers along the rocks like a little playful wheedling— . . .

CURTAIN

SCENE VII.—*The graveyard, in a clear November night. On bush and tree rustles the withered foliage. Jagged clouds speed by under the moon.*—MELCHIOR *clammers over the wall above MORITZ's grave—set much farther up-stage than in Scene II—and jumps down, knocking over MORITZ's cross.*

MELCHIOR—The pack won't follow me into this place.—While they're searching brothels, I can catch my breath and see how far I've gotten. . . .

Coat in tatters, pockets empty,—even from the most harmless I have something to fear.—During the day I must try to get farther on in the wood. . . .

I have kicked down a cross.—The little flowers would have been frozen to-night!—All around the earth is bare. . . .

In the realm of the dead!

To climb out of the skylight was not so hard as the road before me.—This was the only thing that I was not prepared for. . . .

I hang above the abyss—everything swallowed up and gone!—Oh, that I had stayed back there!

Why she thru my fault?—Why not the guilty one!—Inscrutable Providence!—I would have broken stones and gone hungry. . . . !

What is left now to keep me straight?—Crime

will follow on crime. I am abandoned to the mire. Not even the strength left to wind things up. . . .

I was not bad!—I was not bad!—I was not bad! . . .

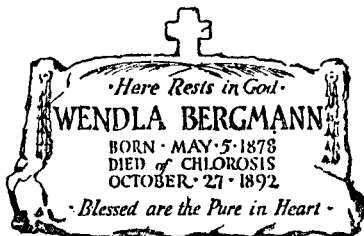
Never has mortal wandered over graves so filled with envy!—Pah! I should never screw up the courage!—Oh, if insanity would but seize on me—this very night!

I must look over there among the latest ones.—The wind whistles past every stone with a different note—a heart-chilling symphony! The rotten wreaths blow apart and dangle on their long strings piecemeal round the marble crosses—a forest of scarecrows!—Scarecrows on all the graves, each more horrible than the next, house-high, putting the devils to flight.—The golden letters glitter so coldly. . . . The weeping willow moans, and gropes with gigantic fingers over the inscriptions! . . .

A praying cherub—a bare slab——

Now a cloud casts its shadow down here.—How fast it flies, crying!—like a host pursued it rushes up in the east.—Not a star in the sky!——

Evergreen round the plot?—Evergreen?—a girl? . . .



And I am her murderer!—I am her murderer!—Despair is left me—only despair!—I may not cry here. I must get away—away! [MORITZ STIEFEL, *with his head under his arm, comes stumping over the graves.*]

MORITZ—One moment, Melchior. It may be long before the chance recurs. You've no idea how everything depends on the time and place. . . .

MELCHIOR—Where did you come from?

MORITZ—From over there—from the wall. You knocked down my cross. I lie by the wall.—Give me your hand, Melchior. . . .

MELCHIOR—You are not Moritz Stiefel!

MORITZ—Give me your hand. I'm certain sure you'll thank me. It'll never be so easy for you again. This is a rarely fortunate meeting.—I came up especially—

MELCHIOR—Don't you sleep?

MORITZ—Not what you call sleeping.—We sit on church steeples, on lofty gables,—wherever we want. . . .

MELCHIOR—Ever restless?

MORITZ—For fun.—We scoot around young birch-trees, round lonely forest shrines. Over gatherings of people we hover, over sites of misfortune, over gardens and festival places. In the dwelling-houses we crouch in the chimney-corner and behind the bed-curtains.—Give me your hand!—We have little to do with each other but we see and hear everything that happens in the world. We know

that everything is folly that men strive for and achieve,—and laugh at it.

MELCHIOR—What good does that do?

MORITZ—What's it need to do?—We are out of reach—nor good nor evil can touch us any more. We stand high, high above the earth-folk, each for himself alone. We have nothing to do with each other because that bores us. None of us still has anything at heart whose loss he could feel. We are equally immeasurably far above both grief and rejoicing. We are content with ourselves, and that is all!—The living we despise beyond words: we can hardly pity them. They amuse us with their doings, because, being alive, they are not really to be pitied. We smile, each to himself, over their tragedies, and meditate.—Give me your hand! If you will give me your hand, you will fall over with laughing at the emotion with which you give me your hand. . . .

MELCHIOR—Doesn't that disgust you?

MORITZ—We stand too high above it for that. We smile!—At my funeral I was among the mourners. I got a lot of entertainment from it. That is sublimity, Melchior! I made more noise than any of them, and slipped off to the wall to hold my sides for laughter. Our unapproachable sublimity is in fact the only standpoint that lets us assimilate the dirt. . . . I suppose I was laughed at too before I soared aloft!

MELCHIOR—I have no desire to laugh at myself.

MORITZ—. . . The living as such are truly not to be pitied.—I admit I should never have thought

so either. And now it's beyond my comprehension how one can be so naïve. Now I see thru the fraud so clearly that not the tiniest cloud is left.—How can you hesitate, Melchior? Give me your hand. In a turn of the head you'll be standing sky-high above yourself.—Your living is a grievous omission, a sin of negligence. . . .

MELCHIOR—Can you dead forget?

MORITZ—We can do everything. Give me your hand! We can be sorry for the young, for the way they take their timidity for idealism, and the old, whose stoical superiority comes near to breaking their hearts. We see the Kaiser shake for dread of a street-song, and the beggar for dread of the trump of doom. We look straight thru the actor's make-up, and see the poet in the dark don his. We behold the contented man in his beggary, and in the weariness of his burdened soul the capitalist. We observe people in love, and see them blush before each other in the presentiment that they are frauds defrauded. Parents we see bringing children into the world in order that they may call to them "How fortunate you are to have such parents!"—and we see the children go forth and do the like. We can eavesdrop on the innocent in their lonely cravings, and the five-groschen drab at her reading of Schiller. . . . God and the devil we see making fools of themselves before each other, and cherish in our hearts the unshakable conviction that both are drunk. . . . A quiet—a content—Melchior!—You need only reach me your little finger.—You may get

to be snow-white before such a favorable moment appears to you again.

MELCHIOR—If I shake hands on it, Moritz, it will be from self-contempt. I see myself proscribed. What lent me courage, lies in the grave. I can no longer think myself worthy of noble impulses—and perceive nothing, nothing, that might yet stand in the way of my descent.—I am, in my own opinion, the most detestable creature in the universe. . . .

MORITZ—What are you waiting for? [A MUFFLED GENTLEMAN *enters, and addresses* MELCHIOR.]

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—The fact is, you're shivering with hunger. You're in no sort of condition to decide.—[*To* MORITZ.] Go.

MELCHIOR—Who are you?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—That will come out.—[*To* MORITZ.] Vanish!—What have you here to do?—Why haven't you got your head on?

MORITZ—I shot myself.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Then stay where you belong! You're altogether done with. Don't bother us here with your charnel stench. Inconceivable—why, just look at your fingers! Pah, what the devil! they're crumbling down already!

MORITZ—Don't send me away, please! . . .

MELCHIOR—Who are you, good sir?

MORITZ—Don't send me away, I beg you! Let me take part in things here a little while yet. I will not oppose you in anything.—It's so chilly down there!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Then why do you

brag about sublimity?—You know well enough that that's humbug—sour grapes! Why do you wilfully lie, you coinage of the brain?—If you value the favor so highly, stay for all of me; but look out for any more hot-air boasting, my friend, and kindly keep your rotting hand out of the game!

MELCHIOR—Are you going to tell me who you are, or not?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—No.—I propose that you entrust yourself to me. First, I should see to your getting away.

MELCHIOR—You are—my father?!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Would you not recognize your worthy father by his voice?

MELCHIOR—No.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—The gentleman, your father, is seeking comfort at this moment in the capable arms of your mother.—I open the world to you. Your momentary want of balance springs from your wretched situation. With a hot supper in your belly, you can laugh at it.

MELCHIOR—[*To himself.*] They can't both be the devil!—[*Aloud.*] After what I have been guilty of, no hot supper can give my peace of mind back to me!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—That depends on the supper!—So much I can tell you: that the little girl would have borne her child first rate! She was perfectly built. She simply succumbed to Mother Schmidtin's abortives.—I will take you among men. I will give you an opportunity to expand your hori-

zon beyond your wildest dreams. I will make you acquainted with everything interesting, without exception, that the world has to offer.

MELCHIOR—Who are you? Who are you?—I can't consign myself to a person I don't know!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—You'll never learn to know me unless you entrust yourself to me.

MELCHIOR—Do you think so?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Fact!—And anyway you have no choice.

MELCHIOR—I can at any moment give my friend here my hand.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Your friend is a charlatan. Nobody smiles, who has one penny left in his pocket. The sublimated humorist is the wretchedest, most pitiable creature in creation!

MELCHIOR—Let the humorist be what he will. Tell me who you are, or I'll give the humorist my hand!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Well?!

MORITZ—He is right, Melchior. I have been putting on airs. Let him treat you, and make full use of him. No matter how muffled he may be, he is, at least, that!

MELCHIOR—Do you believe in God?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—That depends.

MELCHIOR—Do you want to tell me who discovered gunpowder?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Berthold Schwarz—alias Constantine Anklitzen—round 1330, a Franciscan monk at Freiburg-im-Breisgau.

MORITZ—What would I give to have had him let it alone!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—You would merely have hanged yourself!

MELCHIOR—What do you think about morality?

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Look here!—am I your schoolboy?

MELCHIOR—Ask me what you are!

MORITZ—Don't quarrel!—Please don't quarrel! What good will come of that?—What are we sitting, one dead and two live men, here together in the churchyard at two in the morning for, if we want to fall out like tipplers!—It was for my pleasure that I was allowed to remain and witness the proceedings. If you want to quarrel, I'll take my head under my arm and go.

MELCHIOR—You're still the same old runaway!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—The ghost isn't so wrong. One shouldn't ignore one's dignity.—By morality I understand the real product of two imaginary quantities. The imaginary quantities are should and would.¹ The product is called morality, and its reality is unquestionable.

MORITZ—Oh, if you had only told me that sooner! My morality harried me to death. For my dear parents' sake I clutched at deadly weapons. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land." In my case the text has phenomenally stultified itself!

¹ In German, *sollen* and *wollen*, verbs representing duty and desire.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Indulge in no illusions, my dear friend. Your precious parents would no more have died of it than you. Strictly speaking, they would in fact have stormed and blustered merely from the necessities of health.

MELCHIOR—You may be right so far:—but I can tell you positively, good sir, that if I had given Moritz my hand just now without more ado, the blame would have rested simply and solely on my morality.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—But that's just the reason you're not Moritz!

MORITZ—All the same I don't believe the difference is so material—at least, not so conclusive, that you might not perchance have met me too, esteemed Unknown, as I trotted that time through the alder-thickets with the pistol in my pocket.

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—And don't you remember me? Why, even at the final moment, you still were standing between Death and Life.—But here, in my opinion, is not exactly the place to prolong so deeply probing a debate.

MORITZ—It is indeed growing cold, gentlemen!—Though they did dress me in my Sunday suit, I have on under it neither shirt nor drawers.

MELCHIOR—Good-bye, dear Moritz. Where this person is taking me, I don't know; but he is somebody——

MORITZ—Don't lay it up against me, Melchior, that I tried to make away with you! It was old attachment.—I'd be willing to have to wail and weep

all my life if I could now accompany you out of here once more!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—In the end, each has his share—y o u the consoling consciousness of having nothing—t h o u the enervating doubt of everything.—[*To MORITZ.*] Farewell.

MELCHIOR—Farewell, Moritz! Accept my cordial thanks for appearing to me once more. How many glad, untroubled days have we not spent with one another in these fourteen years! I promise you, Moritz, let chance what will,—tho in the years to come I turn ten times a different man,—be my path upwards or downwards,—you I shall never forget——

MORITZ—Thanks, thanks, dear friend.

MELCHIOR—And when some day I am an old man, grizzle-haired, then perhaps it will be y o u that once again stand closer to me than all those living with me.

MORITZ—I thank you.—Luck to your journey, gentlemen!—Lose no more time!

THE MUFFLED GENTLEMAN—Come, child! [*He links arms with MELCHIOR, and makes off with him over the graves.*]

MORITZ—Here I sit now with my head in my arm.—The moon hides her face, unveils again, and looks not a hair the wiser.—So now I'll turn back to my little plot, straighten the cross up that the mad-cap kicked so recklessly down on me, and when all is in order I'll lay myself out on my back again, warm myself with decay, and smile. . . .

CURTAIN

EARTH-SPIRIT

(ERDGEIST)

A Tragedy in Four Acts

“I was created out of ranker stuff
By Nature, and to the earth by Lust am drawn.
Unto the spirit of evil, not of good,
The earth belongs. What deities send to us
From heaven are only universal goods;
Their light gives gladness, but makes no man rich;
In their domain no pelf is seized and held.
The stone of price, all-treasured gold, from false
And evil-natured powers must be won,
Who riot underneath the light of day.
Not without sacrifice their favor is gained,
And no man liveth who from serving them
Hath extricated undefiled his soul.”

[Spoken by Wallenstein in Schiller's
Wallenstein's Death, Act II.]

CHARACTERS

DR. SCHÖN, *newspaper owner and editor*

ALVA, *his son, a writer*

DR. GOLL, M.D.

SCHWARZ, *an artist*

PRINCE ESCERNY, *an African explorer*

ESCHERICH, *a reporter*

SCHIGOLCH, *a beggar*

RODRIGO, *an acrobat*

HUGENBERG, *a schoolboy*

FERDINAND, *a coachman*

LULU

COUNTESS GESCHWITZ

HENRIETTE, *a servant*

PROLOGUE

[At rise is seen the entrance to a tent, out of which steps an animal-tamer, with long, black curls, dressed in a white cravat, a vermillion dress-coat, white trousers and white top-boots. He carries in his left hand a dog-whip and in his right a loaded revolver, and enters to the sound of cymbals and kettle-drums.]

Walk in! Walk in to the menagerie,
Proud gentlemen and ladies lively and merry.
With avid lust or cold disgust, the very
Beast without Soul bound and made secondary
To human genius, to stay and see!
Walk in, the show'll begin!—As customary,
One child to each two persons comes in free.

Here battle man and brute in narrow cages,
Where one in mockery his long whip lashes,
The other, growling as when thunder rages,
Against the man's throat murderously dashes,—
Where now the crafty, now the strong prevails,
Now man, now beast, against the flooring quails.
The animal rears,—the human on all fours!
One ice-cold look of dominance—

The beast submissive bows before that glance,
And the proud heel upon his neck adores.

Bad are the times! Ladies and gentlemen
Who once before my cage in thronging crescents
Crowded, now honor operas, and then
Ibsen, with their so highly valued presence.
My boarders here are so in want of fodder
That they reciprocally devour each other.
How well off at the theater is a player,
Sure of the meat upon his ribs, no matter
How terrible the hunger round his platter,
And colleagues' inner cupboards yawning bare!—
But if to heights of art we would aspire,
We may not reckon merit by its hire.

What see you, whether in light or sombre plays?
House-animals, whose morals all must praise,
Who vent pale spites in vegetarian ways,
And revel in a singsong to-and-fro
Just like those others—in the seats below.
This hero has a head by one dram swirled;
That, is in doubt whether his love be right;
A third you hear despairing of the world,—
Full five acts long you hear him wail his plight,
And no man ends him with a merciful sleight!
But the real beast, the beautiful, wild beast,
Your eyes on that, I, ladies, only, feast!

You see the Tiger, that habitually
Devours whatever falls before his bound;

The Bear, who, gluttonous from the first sally,
Sinks at his late night-meal dead to the ground;
You see the Monkey, little and amusing,
From sheer ennui his petty powers abusing,—
He has some talent, of all greatness scant,
So, impudently, coquettes with his own want!
Upon my soul, within my tent and trammel—
See, right behind the curtain, here—'s a Camel!
And all my creatures fawn about my feet
When my revolver cracks—

[He shoots into the audience.]

Behold!

Brutes tremble all around me. I am cold:
The man stays cold,—you, with respect, to greet.

Walk in!—You hardly trust yourselves in here?—
Then very well, judge for yourselves! Each sphere
Has sent its crawling creatures to your telling:
Chameleons and serpents, crocodiles,
Dragons, and salamanders chasm-dwelling,—
I know, of course, you're full of quiet smiles
And don't believe a syllable I say.—

[He lifts the entrance-flap and calls into the tent.]

Hi, Charlie!—bring our Serpent just this way!

[A stage-hand with a big paunch carries out the actress of LULU in her Pierrot costume, and sets her down before the animal-tamer.]

She was created to incite to sin,
 To lure, seduce, corrupt, drop poison in,—
 To murder, without being once suspected.

[*Tickling LULU's chin.*]

My pretty beast, only be u n a f f e c t e d,
 Not vain, not artificial, not perverse,
 Even if the critics therefore turn adverse.
 Thou hast no right to spoil the shape most fitting,
 Most t r u e, of w o m a n, with meows and spitting!
 Nor with buffoonery and wry device
 To foul the c h i l d i s h s i m p l e n e s s of V i c e
 Thou shouldst—to-day I speak emphatically—
 Speak n a t u r a l l y and not unnaturally,
 For the first principle, of earliest force
 In every art, has been Be matter-of-course!

[*To the public.*]

There's nothing special now to see in her,
 But wait and watch what later will occur!
 She coils about the Tiger stricter—stricter—
 He roars and groans!—Who'll be the final victor?—
 Hop, Charlie, march! Carry her to her cage,

[*The stage-hand picks up LULU slantwise in
 his arms; the animal-tamer pats her on the
 hips.*]

Sweet innocence—my dearest appanage!

[*The stage-hand carries LULU back into the
 tent.*]

And now the best thing yet remains to say:
 My poll between the teeth of a beast of prey!

Walk in! The show's not new, yet every heart
Takes pleasure in it still! I'll wrench apart
This wild beast's jaws—I dare—and he'll not dare
To close and bite! Let him be ne'er so fair,
So wild and brightly flecked, he feels respect
For my poor poll! I offer it him direct:
One j o k e, and my two temples crack!—but, lo,
The lightning of my eyes I will forego,
Staking my life against a j o k e! and throw
My whip, my weapons, down. I am in my skin!
I yield me to this beast!—His name do ye know?
—The honored public! that has just walked in!

*[The animal-tamer steps back into the tent,
accompanied by cymbals and kettledrums.]*

ACT I

SCENE—*A roomy studio. Entrance door at the rear, left. Another door at lower left to the bedroom. At centre, a platform for the model, with a Spanish screen behind it, shielding it from the rear door, and a Smyrna rug in front. Two easels at lower right. On the upper one is the picture of a young girl's head and shoulders. Against the other leans a reversed canvas. Below these, toward centre, an ottoman, with a tiger-skin on it. Two chairs along the left wall. In the background, right, a step-ladder.*

SCHÖN *sits on the foot of the ottoman, inspecting critically the picture on the further easel. SCHWARZ stands behind the ottoman, his palette and brushes in his hands.*

SCHÖN—Do you know, I'm getting acquainted with a brand-new side of the lady.

SCHWARZ—I have never painted anyone whose expression changed so continuously. I could hardly keep a single feature the same two days running.

SCHÖN—[*Pointing to the picture and observing him.*] Do you find that in it?

SCHWARZ—I have done everything I could think of to induce at least some repose in her mood by my conversation during the sittings.

SCHÖN — Then I understand the difference.

[SCHWARZ dips his brush in the oil and draws it over the features of the face.] Do you think that makes it look more like her?

SCHWARZ—We can do no more than take our art as scientifically as possible.

SCHÖN—Tell me——

SCHWARZ—[*Stepping back.*] The color had sunk in pretty well, too.

SCHÖN—[*Looking at him.*] Have you ever in your life loved a woman?

SCHWARZ—[*Goes to the easel, puts a color on it, and steps back on the other side.*] The dress hasn't been given relief enough yet. We don't rightly perceive yet that a living body is under it.

SCHÖN—I make no doubt that the workmanship is good.

SCHWARZ—If you'll step this way. . . .

SCHÖN—[*Rising.*] You must have told her regular ghost-stories.

SCHWARZ—As far back as you can.

SCHÖN—[*Stepping back, knocks down the canvas that was leaning against the lower easel.*] Excuse me——

SCHWARZ—[*Picking it up.*] That's all right.

SCHÖN—[*Surprised.*] What is that?

SCHWARZ—Do you know her?

SCHÖN—No. [SCHWARZ sets the picture on the easel. It is of a lady dressed as Pierrot with a long shepherd's crook in her hand.]

SCHWARZ—A costume-picture.

SCHÖN—But, really, you've succeeded with her.

SCHWARZ—You know her?

SCHÖN—No. And in that costume——

SCHWARZ—It isn't nearly finished yet. [SCHÖN *nods.*] What would you have? While she is posing for me I have the pleasure of entertaining her husband.

SCHÖN—What?

SCHWARZ—We talk about art, of course,—to complete my good fortune!

SCHÖN—But how did you come to make such a charming acquaintance?

SCHWARZ—As they're generally made. An ancient, tottering little man drops in on me here to know if I can paint his wife. Why, of course, were she as wrinkled as Mother Earth! Next day at ten prompt the doors fly open, and the fat-belly drives this little beauty in before him. I can feel even now how my knees shook. Then comes a sap-green lackey, stiff as a ramrod, with a package under his arm. Where is the dressing-room? Imagine my plight. I open the door there. [*Pointing left.*] Just luck that everything was in order. The sweet thing vanishes into it, and the old fellow posts himself outside as a bastion. Two minutes later out she steps in this Pierrot. [*Shaking his head.*] I never saw anything like it. [*He goes left and stares in at the bedroom.*]

SCHÖN—[*Who has followed him with his eyes.*] And the fat-belly stands guard?

SCHWARZ—[*Turning round.*] The whole body in harmony with that impossible costume as if it had

come into the world in it! Her way of burying her elbows in her pockets, of lifting her little feet from the rug,—the blood often shoots to my head. . . .

SCHÖN—One can see that in the picture.

SCHWARZ—[*Shaking his head.*] People like us, you know——

SCHÖN—Here the model is mistress of the conversation.

SCHWARZ—She has never yet opened her mouth.

SCHÖN—Is it possible?

SCHWARZ—Allow me to show you the costume.
[*Goes out left.*]

SCHÖN—[*Before the Pierrot.*] A devilish beauty.
[*Before the other picture.*] There's more depth here.
[*Coming down-stage.*] He is still rather young for his age. [SCHWARZ comes back with a white satin costume.]

SCHWARZ—What sort of material is that?

SCHÖN—[*Feeling it.*] Satin.

SCHWARZ—And all in one piece.

SCHÖN—How does one get into it then?

SCHWARZ—That I can't tell you.

SCHÖN—[*Taking the costume by the legs.*] What enormous trouser-legs!

SCHWARZ—The left one she pulls up.

SCHÖN—[*Looking at the picture.*] Above the knee!

SCHWARZ—She does that entrancingly!

SCHÖN—And transparent stockings?

SCHWARZ—Those have got to be painted, specially.

SCHÖN—Oh, you can do that.

SCHWARZ—And with it all a coquetry!

SCHÖN—What brought you to that horrible suspicion?

SCHWARZ—There are things never dreamt of in our school-philosophy. [*He takes the costume back into his bedroom.*]

SCHÖN—[*Alone.*] When one is asleep . . .

SCHWARZ—[*Comes back; looks at his watch.*] If you'd like to make her acquaintance, moreover,——

SCHÖN—No.

SCHWARZ—They must be here in a moment.

SCHÖN—How much longer will the lady have to sit?

SCHWARZ—I shall probably have to bear the pains of Tantalus three months longer.

SCHÖN—I mean the other one.

SCHWARZ—I beg your pardon. Three times more at most. [*Going to the door with him.*] If the lady will just leave me the upper part of the dress then. . . .

SCHÖN—With pleasure. Let us see you at my house again soon. [*He collides in the doorway with DR. GOLL and LULU.*] For Heaven's sake!

SCHWARZ—May I introduce . . .

DR. GOLL—[*To SCHÖN.*] What are you doing here?

SCHÖN—[*Kissing LULU's hand.*] Mrs. Goll. . . .

LULU—You're not going already?

DR. GOLL—But what wind blows you here?

SCHÖN—I've been looking at the picture of my intended——

LULU—[*Coming forward.*] Your—intended—is here?

DR. GOLL—So you're having work done here, too?

LULU—[*Before the upper picture.*] Look at it! Enchanting! Entrancing!

DR. GOLL—[*Looking round him.*] Have you got her hidden somewhere round here?

LULU—So that is the sweet young prodigy who's made a new person out of you. . . .

SCHÖN—She sits in the afternoon mostly.

. DR. GOLL—And you don't tell anyone about it?

LULU—[*Turning round.*] Is she really so solemn?

SCHÖN—Probably the after-effects of the seminary still, dear lady.

DR. GOLL—[*Before the picture.*] One can see that you have been transformed profoundly.

LULU—But now you mustn't let her wait any longer.

SCHÖN—In a fortnight I think our engagement will come out.

DR. GOLL—[*To LULU.*] Let's lose no time. Hop!

LULU—[*To SCHÖN.*] Just think, we came at a trot over the new bridge. I was driving, myself.

DR. GOLL—[*As SCHÖN prepares to leave.*] No, no. We two have more to talk about. Get along, Nellie. Hop!

LULU—Now it's going to be about me!

DR. GOLL—Our Apelles is already wiping his brushes.

LULU—I had imagined this would be much more amusing.

SCHÖN—But you have always the satisfaction of preparing for us the greatest and rarest pleasure.

LULU—[*Going left.*] Oh, just wait!

SCHWARZ—[*Before the bedroom door.*] If madame will be so kind. . . . [*Shuts the door after her and stands in front of it.*]

DR. GOLL—I christened her Nellie, you know, in our marriage-contract.

SCHÖN—Did you?—Yes.

DR. GOLL—What do you think of it?

SCHÖN—Why not call her rather Mignon?

DR. GOLL—That would have been good, too. I didn't think of that.

SCHÖN—Do you consider the name so important?

DR. GOLL—Hm. . . . You know, I have no children.

SCHÖN—But you've only been married a couple of months.

DR. GOLL—Thanks, I don't want any.

SCHÖN—[*Having taken out his cigarette-case.*] Have a cigarette?

DR. GOLL—[*Helps himself.*] I've plenty to do with this one. [*To SCHWARZ.*] Say, what's your little danseuse doing now?

SCHÖN—[*Turning round on SCHWARZ.*] You and a danseuse?

SCHWARZ—The lady was sitting for me at that time only as a favor. I made her acquaintance on a flying trip of the Cecilia Society.

DR. GOLL—[*To SCHÖN.*] Hm. . . . I think we're getting a change of weather.

SCHÖN—The toilet isn't going so quickly, is it?

DR. GOLL—It's going like lightning! Woman has got to be a virtuoso in her job. So must we all, each in his job, if life isn't to turn to beggary. [*Calls.*] Hop, Nellie!

LULU—[*Inside.*] Just a second!

DR. GOLL—[*To SCHÖN.*] I can't get onto these blockheads. [*Referring to SCHWARZ.*]

SCHÖN—I can't help envying them. These blockheads know of nothing holier than an altar-cloth, and feel richer than you and me with 30,000-mark incomes. Besides, you're no person to judge a man who has lived since childhood from palette to mouth. Take it upon yourself to finance him: it's an arithmetic example! I haven't the moral courage, and one can easily burn one's fingers, too.

LULU—[*As PIERROT, steps out of the bedroom.*] Here I am!

SCHÖN—[*Turns; after a pause.*] Superb!

LULU—[*Nearer.*] Well?

SCHÖN—You shame the boldest fancy.

LULU—How do you like me?

SCHÖN—A picture before which art must despair.

DR. GOLL—Ah, you think so, too?

SCHÖN—[*To LULU.*] Have you any notion what you're doing?

LULU—I'm perfectly aware of myself!

SCHÖN—Then you might be a little more discreet.

LULU—But I'm only doing what's my duty.

SCHÖN—You are powdered?

LULU—What do you take me for!*

DR. GOLL—I've never seen such a white skin as she's got. I've told our Raphael here, too, to do just as little with the flesh tints as possible. I can't get up any enthusiasm for this modern daubing.

SCHWARZ—[*By the easels, preparing his paints.*] At any rate, it's thanks to impressionism that present-day art can stand up beside the old masters without blushing.

DR. GOLL—Oh, it may be quite the thing for a brute being led to slaughter.

SCHÖN—For Heaven's sake don't get excited! [LULU falls on GOLL's neck and kisses him.]

DR. GOLL—They can see your undershirt. You must pull it lower.

LULU—I would soonest have left it off. It only bothers me.

DR. GOLL—He should be able to paint it out.

LULU—[*Taking the shepherd's crook that leans against the Spanish screen, and mounting the platform, to SCHÖN.*] What would you say now, if you had to stand at attention for two hours?

SCHÖN—I'd sell my soul to the devil for the chance to exchange with you.

DR. GOLL—[*Sitting, left.*] Come over here. Here is my post of observation.

LULU—[*Plucking her left trouser-leg up to the knee, to SCHWARZ.*] So?

SCHWARZ—Yes. . . .

LULU—[*Plucking it a thought higher.*] So?

SCHWARZ—Yes, yes. . . .

DR. GOLL—[*To SCHÖN, who has seated himself on the chair next him, with a gesture.*] I find that she shows up even better from here.

LULU—[*Without stirring.*] I beg pardon! I show up equally well from every side.

SCHWARZ—[*To LULU.*] The right knee further forward, please.

SCHÖN—[*With a gesture.*] The body does show finer lines perhaps.

SCHWARZ—The lighting is at least half-way bearable to-day.

DR. GOLL—Oh, you must throw on lots of it! Hold your brush a bit longer.

SCHWARZ—Certainly, Dr. Goll.

DR. GOLL—Treat her as a piece of still-life.

SCHWARZ—Certainly, Doctor. [*To LULU.*] You used to hold your head a wee mite higher, Mrs. Goll.

LULU—[*Raising her head.*] Paint my lips a little open.

SCHÖN—Paint snow on ice. If you get warm doing that, then instantly your art gets inartistic!

SCHWARZ—Certainly, Doctor.

DR. GOLL—Art, you know, must so reproduce nature that one can get at least some spiritual enjoyment from it!

LULU—[*Opening her mouth a little, to SCHWARZ.*] So—look. I'll hold it half opened, so.

SCHWARZ—Every time the sun comes out, the wall opposite throws warm reflections in here.

DR. GOLL—[*To LULU.*] You must keep your pose and behave as if our Velasquez here were non-existent.

LULU—Well, a painter is n't a man, anyway.

SCHÖN—I don't think you ought to judge the whole craft from nothing more than one notable exception.

SCHWARZ—[*Stepping back from the easel.*] However, I rather wish I had had to hire a different studio last fall.

SCHÖN—[*To GOLL.*] What I wanted to ask you—have you seen the little Murphy girl yet as a Peruvian pearl-fisher?

DR. GOLL—I see her to-morrow for the fourth time. Prince Polossov took me. His hair has already got dark yellow again with delight.

SCHÖN—So you find her quite fabulous, too.

DR. GOLL—Who ever wants to judge of that beforehand?

LULU—I think someone knocked.

SCHWARZ—Pardon me a moment. [*Goes and opens the door.*]

DR. GOLL—[*To LULU.*] You can safely smile at him less bashfully!

SCHÖN—To him it means nothing at all.

DR. GOLL—And if it did!—What are we two sitting here for?

ALVA SCHÖN—[*Entering, still behind the Spanish screen.*] May one come in?

SCHÖN—My son!

LULU—Oh! It's Mr. Alva!

DR. GOLL—Don't mind. Just come along in.

ALVA—[*Stepping forward, shakes hands with SCHÖN and GOLL.*] Glad to see you. [*Turning toward LULU.*] Do I see aright? Oh, if only I could engage you for my title part!

LULU—I don't think I could dance nearly well enough for your show!

ALVA—Ah, but you have a dancing-master whose like cannot be found on any stage in Europe.

SCHÖN—But what brings you here?

DR. GOLL—Maybe you're having somebody or other painted here, too, in secret!

ALVA—[*To SCHÖN.*] I wanted to take you to the dress rehearsal.

DR. GOLL—[*As SCHÖN rises.*] Oho, do you have 'em dance to-day in full costume already?

ALVA—Of course. Come along, too. In five minutes I must be on the stage. [*To LULU.*] Poor me!

DR. GOLL—I've forgotten—what's the name of your ballet?

ALVA—Dalailama.

DR. GOLL—I thought he was in a madhouse.

SCHÖN—You're thinking of Nietzsche, Doctor.

DR. GOLL—You're right; I got 'em mixed up.

ALVA—I have helped Buddhism to its legs.

DR. GOLL—By his legs is the stage-poet known.

ALVA—Corticelli dances the youthful Buddha as tho she had seen the light of the world by the Ganges.

SCHÖN—So long as her mother lived, she danced with her legs.

ALVA—Then when she got free she danced with her intelligence.

DR. GOLL—Now she dances with her heart.

ALVA—If you'd like to see her——

DR. GOLL—Thank you.

ALVA—Come along with us!

DR. GOLL—Impossible.

SCHÖN—Anyway, we have no time to lose.

ALVA—Come with us, Doctor. In the third act you see Dalailama in his cloister, with his monks——

DR. GOLL—The only thing I care about is the young Buddha.

ALVA—Well, what's hindering you?

DR. GOLL—I can't. I can't do it.

ALVA—We're going to Peter's, after it. There you can express your admiration.

DR. GOLL—Don't press me any further, please.

ALVA—You'll see the tame monkey, the two Brahmins, the little girls. . . .

DR. GOLL—For heaven's sake, keep away from me with your little girls!

LULU—Reserve us a proscenium box for Monday, Mr. Alva.

ALVA—How could you doubt that I would, dear lady!

DR. GOLL—When I come back this Hellebreugel will have messed up the whole picture on me.

ALVA—Well, it could be painted over.

DR. GOLL—If I don't explain to this Caravacci every stroke of his brush——

SCHÖN—Your fears are unfounded, I think. . . .

DR. GOLL—Next time, gentlemen!

ALVA—The Brahmins are getting impatient. The daughters of Nirvana are shivering in their tights.

DR. GOLL—Damned splotchiness!

SCHÖN—We'll get jumped on if we don't bring you with us.

DR. GOLL—In five minutes I'll be back. [*Stands down right, behind SCHWARZ and compares the picture with LULU.*]

ALVA—[*To LULU, regretfully.*] Duty calls me, gracious lady!

DR. GOLL—[*To SCHWARZ.*] You must model it a bit more here. The hair is bad. You aren't paying enough attention to your business!

ALVA—Come on.

DR. GOLL—Now, just hop it! Ten horses will not drag me to Peter's.

SCHÖN—[*Following ALVA and GOLL.*] We'll take my carriage. It's waiting downstairs. [*Exeunt.*]

SCHWARZ—[*Leans over to the right, and spits.*] Pack!—If only life could end!—The bread-basket!—paunch and mug!—my artist's pride has got its back up. [*After a look at LULU.*] This company!—[*Gets up, goes up left, observes LULU from all sides, and sits again at his easel.*] The choice would be a hard one to make. If I may request Mrs. Goll to raise the right hand a little higher.

LULU—[*Grasps the crook as high as she can reach; to herself.*] Who would have thought that was possible!

SCHWARZ—I am quite ridiculous, you think?

LULU—He's coming right back.

SCHWARZ—I can do no more than paint.

LULU—There he is!

SCHWARZ—[*Rising.*] Well?

LULU—Don't you hear?

SCHWARZ—Someone is coming. . . .

LULU—I knew it.

SCHWARZ—It's the janitor. He's sweeping the stairs.

LULU—Thank Heaven!

SCHWARZ—Do you perhaps accompany the doctor to his patients?

LULU—Everything b u t that.

SCHWARZ—Because, you are not accustomed to being alone.

LULU—We have a housekeeper at home.

SCHWARZ—She keeps you company?

LULU—She has a lot of taste.

SCHWARZ—What for?

LULU—She dresses me.

SCHWARZ—Do you go much to balls?

LULU—Never.

SCHWARZ—Then what do you need the dresses for?

LULU—For dancing.

SCHWARZ—You really dance?

LULU—Czardas . . . Samaqueca . . . Skirt-dance.

SCHWARZ—Doesn't—that—disgust you?

LULU—You find me ugly?

SCHWARZ—You don't understand me. But who gives you lessons then?

LULU—Him.

SCHWARZ—Who?

LULU—Him.

SCHWARZ—He?

LULU—He plays the violin——

SCHWARZ—Every day one learns something new.

LULU—I learned in Paris. I took lessons from Eugénie Fougère. She let me copy her costumes, too.

SCHWARZ—What are they like?

LULU—A little green lace skirt to the knee, all in ruffles, low-necked, of course, very low-necked and awfully tight-laced. Bright green petticoat, then brighter and brighter. Snow-white underclothes with a hand's-breadth of lace. . . .

SCHWARZ—I can no longer——

LULU—Then paint!

SCHWARZ—[*Scraping the canvas.*] Aren't you cold at all?

LULU—God forbid! No. What made you ask? Are you so cold?

SCHWARZ—Not to-day. No.

LULU—Praise God, one can breathe!

SCHWARZ—How so? . . . [LULU takes a deep breath.] Don't do that, please! [Sprints up, throws away his palette and brushes, walks up and down.] The bootblack has only her feet to attend to, at least! And his color doesn't eat into his

money, either. If I go without supper to-morrow, no little society lady will be asking me if I know anything about oyster-patties!

LULU—Is he going out of his head?

SCHWARZ—[*Takes up his work again.*] What ever drove the fellow to this test?

LULU—I'd like it better, too, if he had stayed here.

SCHWARZ—We are truly the martyrs of our calling!

LULU—I didn't wish to cause you pain.

SCHWARZ—[*Hesitating, to LULU.*] If you—the left trouser-leg—a little higher——

LULU—Here?

SCHWARZ—[*Steps to the platform.*] Permit me. . . .

LULU—What do you want?

SCHWARZ—I'll show you.

LULU—You mustn't.

SCHWARZ—You are nervous. . . . [*Tries to seize her hand.*]

LULU—[*Throws the crook in his face.*] Let me alone! [*Hurries to the entrance door.*] You're a long way yet from getting me.

SCHWARZ—You can't understand a joke.

LULU—Oh, yes, I can. I understand everything. Just you leave me be. You'll get nothing at all from me by force. Go to your work. You have no right to molest me. [*Flees behind the ottoman.*] Sit down behind your easel!

SCHWARZ—[*Trying to get around the ottoman.*] As soon as I've punished you—you wayward, capricious——

LULU—But you must have me, first! Go away. You can't catch me. In long clothes I'd have fallen into your clutches long ago—but in the Pierrot!

SCHWARZ—[*Throwing himself across the ottoman.*] I've got you!

LULU—[*Hurls the tiger-skin over his head.*] Good night! [*Jumps over the platform and climbs up the step-ladder.*] I can see away over all the cities of the earth.

SCHWARZ—[*Unrolling himself from the rug.*] This old skin!

LULU—I reach up into heaven, and stick the stars in my hair.

SCHWARZ—[*Clambering after her.*] I'll shake it till you fall off!

LULU—If you don't stop, I'll throw the ladder down. [*Climbing higher.*] Will you let go of my legs? God save the Poles! [*Makes the ladder fall over, jumps onto the platform, and as SCHWARZ picks himself up from the floor, throws the Spanish screen down on his head. Hastening down-stage, by the easels.*] I told you that you weren't going to get me.

SCHWARZ—[*Coming forward.*] Let us make peace. [*Tries to embrace her.*]

LULU—Keep away from me, or—— [*She throws the easel with the finished picture at him, so that both fall crashing to the floor.*]

SCHWARZ—[*Screams.*] Merciful Heaven!

LULU—[*Up-stage, right.*] You knocked the hole in it yourself!

SCHWARZ—I am ruined! Ten weeks' work, my journey, my exhibition! Now there is nothing more to lose! [*Plunges after her.*]

LULU—[*Springs over the ottoman, over the fallen step-ladder, and over the platform, down-stage.*] A grave! Don't fall into it! [*She stamps thru the picture on the floor.*] She made a new man out of him! [*Falls forward.*]

SCHWARZ—[*Stumbling over the Spanish screen.*] I am merciless now!

LULU—[*Up-stage.*] Leave me in peace now. I'm getting dizzy. O Gott! O Gott! . . . [*Comes forward and sinks down on the ottoman.* SCHWARZ locks the door; then seats himself next her, grasps her hand, and covers it with kisses—then pauses, struggling with himself. LULU opens her eyes wide.]

LULU—He may come back.

SCHWARZ—How d'you feel?

LULU—As if I had fallen into the water. . . .

SCHWARZ—I love you.

LULU—One time, I loved a student.

SCHWARZ—Nellie——

LULU—With four-and-twenty scars——

SCHWARZ—I love you, Nellie.

LULU—My name isn't Nellie. [SCHWARZ kisses her.] It's Lulu.

SCHWARZ—I would call you Eve.

LULU—Do you know what time it is?

SCHWARZ—[*Looking at his watch.*] Half past

ten. [*LULU takes the watch and opens the case.*]
You don't love me.

LULU—Yes, I do. . . . It's five minutes after half past ten.

SCHWARZ—Give me a kiss, Eve!

LULU—[*Takes him by the chin and kisses him. Throws the watch in the air and catches it.*] You smell of tobacco.

SCHWARZ—Call me Walter.

LULU—It would be uncomfortable to——

SCHWARZ—You're just making believe!

LULU—You're making believe yourself, it seems to me. *I* make believe? What makes you think that? I've never needed to do that.

SCHWARZ—[*Rises, disconcerted, passing his hand over his forehead.*] God in Heaven! The world is strange to me——

LULU—[*Screams.*] Only don't kill me!

SCHWARZ—[*Instantly whirling round.*] Thou hast never yet loved!

LULU—[*Half raising herself.*] You have never yet loved . . . !

DR. GOLL—[*Outside.*] Open the door!

LULU—[*Already sprung to her feet.*] Hide me! O God, hide me!

DR. GOLL—[*Pounding on the door.*] Open the door!

LULU—[*Holding back SCHWARZ as he goes toward the door.*] He will strike me dead!

DR. GOLL—[*Hammering.*] Open the door!

LULU—[*Sunk down before SCHWARZ, gripping his*

knees.] He'll beat me to death! He'll beat me to death!

SCHWARZ—Stand up. . . . [*The door falls crashing into the studio. DR. GOLL with bloodshot eyes rushes upon SCHWARZ and LULU, brandishing his stick.*]

DR. GOLL—You dogs! You . . . [*Pants, struggles for breath a few seconds, and falls headlong to the ground. SCHWARZ's knees tremble. LULU has fled to the door. Pause.*]

SCHWARZ—Mister — Doctor — Doc — Doctor, Goll——

LULU—[*In the door.*] Please, tho, first put the studio in order.

SCHWARZ—Dr. Goll! [*Leans over.*] Doc—[*Steps back.*] He's cut his forehead. Help me to lay him on the ottoman.

LULU—[*Shudders backward in terror.*] No. No. . . .

SCHWARZ—[*Trying to turn him over.*] Dr. Goll.

LULU—He doesn't hear.

SCHWARZ—But you, help me, please.

LULU—The two of us together couldn't lift him.

SCHWARZ—[*Straightening up.*] We must send for a doctor.

LULU—He is fearfully heavy.

SCHWARZ—[*Getting his hat.*] Please, tho, be so good as to put the place a little to rights while I'm away. [*He goes out.*]

LULU—He'll spring up all at once. [*Intensely.*] Bussi!—He just won't notice anything. [*Comes*

down-stage in a wide circle.] He sees my feet, and watches every step I take. He has his eye on me everywhere. [*Touches him with her toe.*] Bussi! [*Flinching, backward.*] It's serious with him. The dance is over. He'll send me to prison. What shall I do? [*Leans down to the floor.*] A strange, wild face! [*Getting up.*] And no one to do him the last services— isn't that sad! [*SCHWARZ returns.*]

SCHWARZ—Still not come to himself?

LULU—[*Down right.*] What shall I do?

SCHWARZ—[*Bending over GOLL.*] Doctor Goll.

LULU—I almost think it's serious.

SCHWARZ—Talk decently!

LULU—He wouldn't say that to me. He makes me dance for him when he doesn't feel well.

SCHWARZ—The doctor will be here in a moment.

LULU—Doctoring won't help him.

SCHWARZ—But people do what they can, in such cases!

LULU—He doesn't believe in it.

SCHWARZ—Don't you want to—at any rate—put something on?

LULU—Yes,—right off.

SCHWARZ—What are you waiting for?

LULU—Please . . .

SCHWARZ—What is it?

LULU—Shut his eyes.

SCHWARZ—You make me shiver.

LULU—Not nearly so much as you make me!

SCHWARZ—I?

LULU—You're a born criminal.

SCHWARZ—Aren't you the least bit touched by this moment?

LULU—It hits me, too, some.

SCHWARZ—Please, just you keep still now!

LULU—It hits you some, too.

SCHWARZ—You really didn't need to add that, at such a moment!

LULU—P l e a s e . . . !

SCHWARZ—Do what you think necessary. I don't know how.

LULU—[*Left of GOLL.*] He's looking at me.

SCHWARZ—[*Right of GOLL.*] And at me, too.

LULU—You're a coward!

SCHWARZ—[*Shuts GOLL's eyes with his handkerchief.*] It's the first time in my life I've ever been condemned to that.

LULU—Didn't you do it to your mother?

SCHWARZ—[*Nervously.*] No.

LULU—You were away, perhaps.

SCHWARZ—No!

LULU—Or else you were afraid?

SCHWARZ—[*Violently.*] No!

LULU—[*Shivering, backward.*] I didn't mean to insult you.

SCHWARZ—She's still alive.

LULU—Then you still have somebody.

SCHWARZ—She's as poor as a beggar.

LULU—I know what that is.

SCHWARZ—Don't laugh at me!

LULU—Now I am rich——

SCHWARZ—It gives me cold shudders—— [*Goes right.*] She can't help it!

LULU—[*To herself.*] What'll I do?

SCHWARZ—[*To himself.*] Absolutely uncivilized! [*They look at each other mistrustfully.* SCHWARZ goes over to her and grips her hand.] Look me in the eyes!

LULU—[*Apprehensively.*] What do you want?

SCHWARZ—[*Takes her to the ottoman and makes her sit next to him.*] Look me in the eyes.

LULU—I see myself in them as Pierrot.

SCHWARZ—[*Shoves her from him.*] Confounded dancer-ing!

LULU—I must change my clothes——

SCHWARZ—[*Holds her back.*] One question——

LULU—I can't answer it.

SCHWARZ—Can you speak the truth?

LULU—I don't know.

SCHWARZ—Do you believe in a Creator?

LULU—I don't know.

SCHWARZ—Can you swear by anything?

LULU—I don't know. Leave me alone. You're mad.

SCHWARZ—What do you believe in, then?

LULU—I don't know.

SCHWARZ—Have you no soul, then?

LULU—I don't know.

SCHWARZ—Have you ever once loved——?

LULU—I don't know.

SCHWARZ—[*Gets up, goes right, to himself.*] She doesn't know!

LULU—[*Without moving.*] I don't know.

SCHWARZ—[*Glancing at GOLL.*] He knows.

LULU—[*Nearer him.*] What do you want to know?

SCHWARZ—[*Angrily.*] Go, get dressed! [LULU goes into the bedroom. To GOLL.] Would I could change with you, you dead man! I give her back to you. I give my youth to you, too. I lack the courage and the faith. I've had to wait patiently too long. It's too late for me. I haven't grown up big enough for happiness. I have a hellish fear of it. Wake up! I didn't touch her. He opens his mouth. Mouth open and eyes shut, like the children. With me it's the other way round. Wake up, wake up! [Kneels down and binds his handkerchief round the dead man's head.] Here I beseech Heaven to make me able to be happy—to give me the strength and the freedom of soul to be just a weeny mite happy! For her sake, only for her sake. [LULU comes out of the bedroom, completely dressed, her hat on, and her right hand under her left arm.]

LULU—[*Raising her left arm, to SCHWARZ.*] Would you hook me up here? My hand trembles.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE—*A very ornamental parlor. Entrance-door rear, left. Curtained entrances right and left, steps leading up to the right one. On the back wall over the fireplace, LULU'S Pierrot picture in a magnificent frame. Right, above the steps, a tall mirror; facing it, right centre, a chaise longue. Left, an ebony writing-table. Centre, a few chairs around a little Chinese table.*

LULU stands motionless before the mirror, in a green silk morning-dress. She frowns, passes a hand over her forehead, feels her cheeks, and draws back from the mirror with a discouraged, almost angry, look. Frequently turning round, she goes left, opens a cigarette-case on the writing-table, lights herself a cigarette, looks for a book among those that are lying on the table, takes one, and lies down on the chaise longue opposite the mirror. After reading a moment, she lets the book sink, and nods seriously to herself in the glass; then resumes reading. SCHWARZ enters, left, palette and brushes in hand, and bends over LULU, kisses her on the forehead, and goes up the steps, right.

SCHWARZ—[*Turning in the doorway.*] Eve!

LULU—[*Smiling.*] At your orders?

SCHWARZ—Seems to me you look extra charming to-day.

LULU—[*With a glance at the mirror.*] Depends on what you expect.

SCHWARZ—Your hair breathes out a morning freshness. . . .

LULU—I've just come out of the water.

SCHWARZ—[*Approaching her.*] I've an awful lot to do to-day.

LULU—You tell yourself you have.

SCHWARZ—[*Lays his palette and brushes down on the carpet, and sits on the edge of the couch.*] What are you reading?

LULU—[*Reads.*] “Suddenly she heard an anchor of refuge come nodding up the stairs.”

SCHWARZ—Who under the sun writes so absorbingly?

LULU—[*Reading.*] “It was the postman with a money-order.” [HENRIETTE, *the servant, comes in, upper left, with a hat-box on her arm and a little tray of letters which she puts on the table.*]

HENRIETTE—The mail. I'm going to take your hat to the milliner, madam. Anything else?

LULU—No. [SCHWARZ *signs to her to go out, which she does, slyly smiling.*]

SCHWARZ—What were all the things you dreamt about last night?

LULU—You've asked me that twice already this morning.

SCHWARZ—[*Rises, takes up the letters.*] News

makes me tremble. Every day I fear the world may go to pieces. [*Giving LULU a letter.*] For you.

LULU—[*Sniffs at the paper.*] Madame Corticelli. [*Hides it in her bosom.*]

SCHWARZ—[*Skimming a letter.*] My Samaqueca-dancer sold—for fifty thousand marks!

LULU—Who's that from?

SCHWARZ—Sedelmeier in Paris. That's the third picture since our marriage. I hardly know how to escape my good fortune!

• LULU—[*Pointing to the letters.*] There are more there.

SCHWARZ—[*Opening an engagement announcement.*] See. [*Gives it to LULU.*]

LULU—[*Reads.*] "Sir Henry von Zarnikow has the honor to announce the engagement of his daughter, Charlotte Marie Adelaide, to Doctor Ludwig Schön."

SCHWARZ—[*As he opens another letter.*] At last! He's been an eternal while evading a public engagement. I can't understand it—a man of his standing and influence. What can be in the way of his marriage?

LULU—What is that that you're reading?

SCHWARZ—An invitation to take part in the international exhibition at St. Petersburg. I have no idea what to paint for it.

LULU—Some entrancing girl or other, of course.

SCHWARZ—Will you be willing to pose for it?

LULU—God knows there are other pretty girls enough in existence!

SCHWARZ—But with no other model—tho she be as racy as hell—can I so fully show the depth and range of my powers.

LULU—Then I must, I suppose. Mightn't it go as well, perhaps, lying down?

SCHWARZ—Really, I'd like best to leave the composition to your taste. [*Folding up the letters.*] Don't let's forget to congratulate Schön to-day, anyway. [*Goes left and shuts the letters in the writing-table.*]

LULU—But we did that a long time ago.

SCHWARZ—For his bride's sake.

LULU—You can write to him again if you want.

SCHWARZ—And now to work! [*Takes up his brushes and palette, kisses LULU, goes up the steps, right, and turns around in the doorway.*] Eve!

LULU—[*Lets her book sink, smiling.*] Your pleasure?

SCHWARZ—[*Approaching her.*] I feel every day as if I were seeing you for the very first time.

LULU—You're a terror.

SCHWARZ—You make me one. [*He sinks on his knees by the couch and caresses her hand.*]

LULU—[*Stroking his hair.*] You're using me up fast.

SCHWARZ—You are mine. And you are never more ensnaring than when you ought for God's sake to be, just once, real ugly for a couple of hours! Since I've had you, I have had nothing further. I've lost hold of myself entirely.

LULU—Don't be so passionate! [*Bell rings in the corridor.*]

SCHWARZ — [*Pulling himself together.*] Confound it!

LULU—No one at home!

SCHWARZ—Perhaps it's the art-dealer——

LULU—And if it's the Chinese Emperor!

SCHWARZ—One moment. [*Exit.*]

LULU—[*Visionary.*] Thou? Thou? [*Closes her eyes.*]

• SCHWARZ—[*Coming back.*] A beggar, who says he was in the war. I have no small change on me. [*Taking up his palette and brushes.*] It's high time, too, that I should finally go to work. [*Goes out, right. LULU touches herself up before the glass, strokes back her hair, and goes out, returning leading in SCHIGOLCH.*]

SCHIGOLCH—I'd thought he was more of a swell—a little more glory to him. He's sort of embarrassed. He quaked a little in the knees when he saw me in front of him.

LULU—[*Shoving a chair round for him.*] How can you beg from him, too?

SCHIGOLCH — I've dragged my seventy-seven spring-times here just for that. You told me he kept at his painting in the mornings.

LULU—He hadn't got quite awake yet. How much do you need?

SCHIGOLCH—Two hundred, if you have that much handy. Personally, I'd like three hundred. Some of my clients have evaporated.

LULU—[*Goes to the writing-table and rummages in the drawers.*] Whew, I'm tired!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Looking round him.*] This helped bring me, too. I've been wanting a long time to see how things were looking with you now.

LULU—Well?

SCHIGOLCH—It gives one cold shivers. [*Looking up.*] Like with me fifty years ago. Instead of the loafing chairs we still had rusty old sabres then. Devil, but you've brought it pretty far! [*Scuffing.*] Carpets . . .

LULU—[*Giving him two bills.*] I like best to walk on them bare-footed.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Scanning LULU's portrait.*] Is that you?

LULU—[*Winking.*] Pretty fine?

SCHIGOLCH—If that's the sort of thing.

LULU—Have something sweet?

SCHIGOLCH—What?

LULU—[*Getting up.*] Elixir de Spaa.

SCHIGOLCH—That doesn't help me—— Does he drink?

LULU—[*Taking a decanter and glasses from a cupboard near the fireplace.*] Not yet. [*Coming down-stage.*] The cordial has such various effects!

SCHIGOLCH—He comes to blows?

LULU—He goes to sleep. [*She fills the two glasses.*]

SCHIGOLCH—When he's drunk, you can see right into his insides.

LULU—I'd rather not. [*Sits opposite SCHIGOLCH.*] Talk to me.

SCHIGOLCH—The streets keep on getting longer, and my legs shorter.

LULU—And your harmonica?

SCHIGOLCH—Wheezes, like me with my asthma. I just keep a-thinking it isn't worth the trouble to make it better. [*They clink glasses.*]

LULU—[*Emptying her glass.*] I'd been thinking that at last you were——

SCHIGOLCH—At last I was up and away? I thought so, too. But no matter how early the sun goes down, still we aren't let lie quiet. I'm hoping for winter. Perhaps then my [*coughing*—my—my asthma will invent some opportunity to carry me off.

LULU—[*Filling the glasses.*] Do you think they could have forgotten you up there?

SCHIGOLCH—Would be possible, for it certainly isn't going like it usually does. [*Stroking her knee.*] Now you tell—not seen you a long time—my little Lulu.

LULU—[*Jerking back, smiling.*] Life is beyond me!

SCHIGOLCH—What do you know about it? You're still so young!

LULU—That you call me Lulu.

SCHIGOLCH—Lulu, isn't it? Have I ever called you anything else?

LULU—I haven't been called Lulu since man can remember.

SCHIGOLCH—Some other kind of name?

LULU—Lulu sounds to me quite antediluvian.

SCHIGOLCH—Children! Children!

LULU—My name now is——

SCHIGOLCH—As if the principle wasn't always the same!

LULU—You mean——

SCHIGOLCH—What is it now?

LULU—E v e.

SCHIGOLCH—Leapt, hopped, skipped, jumped . . .

LULU—That's what I answer to.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Gazing round.*] This is the way I dreamt it for you. It's your natural bent. [*Seeing LULU sprinkling herself with perfume.*] What's that?

LULU—Heliotrope.

SCHIGOLCH—Does that smell better than you?

LULU—[*Sprinkling him.*] That needn't bother you any more.

SCHIGOLCH—Who would have dreamt of this royal luxury before!

LULU—When I think back—Ugh!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Stroking her knee.*] How's it going with you, then? You still keep at the French?

LULU—I lie and sleep.

SCHIGOLCH—That's genteel. That always looks like something. And afterwards?

LULU—I stretch—till it cracks.

SCHIGOLCH—And when it has cracked?

LULU—What do you mind about that?

SCHIGOLCH—What do I mind about that? What

do I mind? I'd rather live till the last trump and renounce all heavenly joys than leave my Lulu deprived of anything down here behind me. What do I mind about that? It's my sympathy. To be sure, my better self is already transfigured—but I still have some understanding of this world.

LULU—I haven't.

SCHIGOLCH—You're too well off.

LULU—[*Shuddering.*] Idiot. . . .

SCHIGOLCH—Better than with the old dancing-bear?

LULU—[*Sadly.*] I don't dance any more.

SCHIGOLCH—He got his call all right.

LULU—Now I am—— [*Stops.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Speak out from your heart, child! I believed in you when there was no more to be seen in you than your two big eyes. What are you now?

LULU—A beast. . . .

SCHIGOLCH—The deuce you—— And what kind of a beast? A fine beast! An elegant beast! A glorified beast!—Well, let them bury me quickly! We're through with prejudices—even with the one against the corpse-washer.

LULU—You needn't be afraid that you will be washed once more.

SCHIGOLCH—Doesn't matter, either. One gets dirty again.

LULU—[*Sprinkling him.*] It would call you back to life again!

SCHIGOLCH—We are mud.

LULU—I beg your pardon! I rub grease into myself every day and then powder on top of it.

SCHIGOLCH—Probably worth while, too, on the dressed-up mucker's account.

LULU—It makes the skin like satin.

SCHIGOLCH—As if it weren't just dirt all the same!

LULU—Thank you. I wish to be worth nibbling at!

SCHIGOLCH—We are. Give a big dinner down below there pretty soon. Keep open house.

LULU—Your guests will hardly overeat themselves at it.

SCHIGOLCH—Patience, girl! Your worshippers won't put you in alcohol, either. It's "schöne Melusine" as long as it keeps reacting. Afterwards? They don't take it at the zoölogical garden. [*Rising.*] The gentle beasties might get stomach-cramps.

LULU—[*Getting up.*] Have you enough?

SCHIGOLCH—Enough and some to spare for planting a juniper on my grave.—I'll find my own way out. [*Exit. LULU follows him, and presently returns with DR. SCHÖN.*]

SCHÖN—What's your father doing here?

LULU—What's the matter?

SCHÖN—If I were your husband that man would never cross my threshold.

LULU—You can be intimate with me. He's not here. [*Referring to SCHWARZ.*]

SCHÖN—Thank you, I'd rather not.

LULU—I don't understand.

SCHÖN—I know you don't. [*Offering her a seat.*]
That is just the point I'd like to speak to you about.

LULU—[*Sitting down uncertainly.*] Then why didn't you yesterday?

SCHÖN—Please, nothing now about yesterday. I did tell you two years ago.

LULU—[*Nervously.*] Oh, yes,—hm!

SCHÖN—Please be kind enough to cease your visits to my house.

LULU—May I offer you an elixir——

SCHÖN—Thanks. No elixir. Have you understood me? [*LULU shakes her head.*] Good. You have the choice. You force me to the most extreme measures:—either act in accordance with your station——

LULU—Or?

SCHÖN—Or—you compel me—I may have to turn to that person who is responsible for your behavior.

LULU—How can you imagine that——?

SCHÖN—I shall request your husband, himself to keep watch over your doings. [*LULU rises, goes up the steps, right.*] Where are you going?

LULU—[*Calls thru the curtains.*] Walter!

SCHÖN—[*Springing up.*] Are you mad?

LULU—[*Turning round.*] Aha!

SCHÖN—I have made the most superhuman efforts to raise you in society. You can be ten times as proud of your name as of your intimacy with me.

LULU—[*Comes down the steps and puts her arm around SCHÖN's neck.*] Why are you still afraid, now that you're at the zenith of your hopes?

SCHÖN—No comedy! The zenith of my hopes? I am at last engaged: I have still to hope that I may bring my bride into a clean house.

LULU—[*Sitting.*] She has developed delightfully in the two years!

SCHÖN—She no longer looks thru one so earnestly.

LULU—She is now, for the first time, a woman. We can meet each other wherever seems suitable to you.

SCHÖN—We shall meet each other nowhere but in the presence of your husband!

LULU—You don't believe yourself what you say.

SCHÖN—Then he must believe it, at least. Go on and call him! Thru his marriage to you, thru all that I've done for him, he has become my friend.

LULU—[*Rising.*] Mine, too.

SCHÖN—And that way I'll cut down the sword over my head.

LULU—You have, indeed, put chains upon me. But I owe my happiness to you. You will get friends by the crowd as soon as you have a pretty young wife again.

SCHÖN—You judge women by yourself! He's got the sense of a child or he would have tracked out your doublings and windings long ago.

LULU—I only wish he would! Then, at last he'd get out of his swaddling-clothes. He puts his trust in the marriage contract he has in his pocket.

Trouble is past and gone. One can now give oneself and let oneself go as if one were at home. That isn't the sense of a child! It's banal! He has no education; he sees nothing; he sees neither me nor himself; he is blind, blind, blind. . . .

SCHÖN—[*Half to himself.*] When his eyes open!

LULU—Open his eyes for him! I'm going to ruin. I'm neglecting myself. He doesn't know me at all. What am I to him? He calls me darling and little devil. He would say the same to any piano-teacher. He makes no pretensions. Everything is all right, to him. That comes from his never in his life having felt the need of intercourse with women.

SCHÖN—If that's true!

LULU—He admits it perfectly openly.

SCHÖN—A man who has painted them, rags and tags and velvet gowns, since he was fourteen.

LULU—Women make him anxious. He trembles for his health and comfort. But he isn't afraid of me!

SCHÖN—How many girls would deem themselves God knows how blessed in your situation.

LULU—[*Softly pleading.*] Seduce him. Corrupt him. You know how. Take him into bad company—you know the people. I am nothing to him but a woman, just woman. He makes me feel so ridiculous. He will be prouder of me. He doesn't know any differences. I'm thinking my head off, day and night, how to shake him up. In my despair I dance

the can-can. He yawns; and drivels something about obscenity.

SCHÖN—Nonsense. He is an artist, though.

LULU—At least he believes he is.

SCHÖN—That's the chief thing!

LULU—When *I* pose for him. . . . He believes, too, that he's a famous man.

SCHÖN—We have made him one.

LULU—He believes everything. He's as diffident as a thief, and lets himself be lied to, till one loses all respect! When we first got to know each other. I made him believe I had never loved before—
[SCHÖN *falls into an easy-chair.*] Otherwise he would really have taken me for some sort of reprobate!

SCHÖN—You make God knows what exorbitant demands on legitimate relations!

LULU—I make no exorbitant demands. Often I even dream still of Goll.

SCHÖN—He was, at any rate, not banal!

LULU—He is there, as if he had never been away. Only he walks as tho in his socks. He isn't angry with me; he's awfully sad. And then he is fearful, as tho he were there without the permission of the police. Otherwise, he feels at ease with us. Only he can't quite get over my having thrown away so much money since——

SCHÖN—You yearn for the whip once more?

LULU—Maybe. I don't dance any more.

SCHÖN—Teach him to do it.

LULU—A waste of trouble.

SCHÖN—Out of a hundred women, ninety educate their husbands to suit themselves.

LULU—He loves me.

SCHÖN—That's fatal, of course.

LULU—He loves me——

SCHÖN—That is an unbridgeable abyss.

LULU—He doesn't know me, but he loves me! If he had anything approaching a true idea of me, he'd tie a stone around my neck and sink me in the sea where it's deepest.

SCHÖN—Let's finish this. [*He gets up.*]

LULU—As you say.

SCHÖN—I've married you off. Twice I have married you off. You live in luxury. I've created a position for your husband. If that doesn't satisfy you, and he laughs in his sleeve at it,—I don't indulge in ideal expectations, but—leave me out of the game, out of it!

LULU—[*Resolutely.*] If I belong to any person on this earth, I belong to you. Without you I'd be—I won't say where. You took me by the hand, gave me food to eat, had me dressed,—when I was going to steal your watch. Do you think that can be forgotten? Anybody else would have called the police. You sent me to school, and had me learn manners. Who but you in the whole world has ever had any kindness for me? I've danced and posed, and was glad to be able to earn my living that way. But love at command, I can't!

SCHÖN—[*Raising his voice.*] Leave me out! Do what you will. I haven't come to raise a row;

I've come to shake myself free of it. My engagement is costing me sacrifices enough! I had imagined that with a healthy young husband—and a woman of your years can hope for none better—you would, at last, have been contented. If you are under obligations to me, don't throw yourself a third time in my way! Am I to wait yet longer before putting my pile in security? Am I to risk letting the final success of all my concessions during the last two years slip from me? What good is it to me to have you married, when you can be seen going in and out of my house at every hour of the day?—Why the devil didn't Dr. Goll stay alive just one year more! With him you were in safe keeping. Then I'd have had my wife long since under my roof!

LULU—And what would you have had then? The kid gets on your nerves. The child is too uncorrupted for you. She's been much too carefully brought up. What should I have against your marriage? But you're making a big mistake if you think that your imminent marriage warrants you in expressing your contempt of me!

SCHÖN—Contempt?—I shall soon give the child the right idea. If anything is contemptible, it's your intrigues!

LULU—[*Laughing.*] Am I jealous of the child? That never once entered my head.

SCHÖN—Then why talk about the child? The child is not even a whole year younger than you are. Leave me my freedom to live what life I still have. No matter how the child's been brought up, she's

got her five senses just like you. . . . [SCHWARZ appears, right, brush in hand.]

SCHWARZ—What's the matter here?

LULU—[To SCHÖN.] Well? Go on. Talk.

SCHWARZ—What's the matter with you two?

LULU—Nothing that touches you——

SCHÖN—[Sharply.] Quiet!

LULU—He's had enough of me. [SCHWARZ leads her off, to the right.]

SCHÖN—[Turning over the leaves in one of the books on the table.] It had to come out—I must have my hands free at last!

SCHWARZ—[Coming back.] Is that any way to jest?

SCHÖN—[Pointing to a chair.] Please.

SCHWARZ—What is it?

SCHÖN—Please.

SCHWARZ—[Seating himself.] Well?

SCHÖN—[Seating himself.] You have married half a million. . . .

SCHWARZ—Is it gone?

SCHÖN—Not a penny.

SCHWARZ—Explain to me the peculiar scene. . . .

SCHÖN—You have married half a million——

SCHWARZ—No one can make a crime of that.

SCHÖN—You have created a name for yourself. You can work unmolested. You need to deny yourself no wish——

SCHWARZ—What have you two got against me?

SCHÖN—For six months you've been revelling in all the heavens. You have a wife whom the world

envies you, and she deserves a man whom she can respect——

SCHWARZ—Doesn't she respect me?

SCHÖN—No.

SCHWARZ—[*Depressed.*] I come from the dark depths of society. She is above me. I cherish no more ardent wish than to become her equal. [*Offers SCHÖN his hand.*] Thank you.

SCHÖN—[*Pressing it, half embarrassed.*] Don't mention it.

SCHWARZ—[*With determination.*] Speak!

SCHÖN—Keep a little more watch on her.

SCHWARZ—I—on her?

SCHÖN—We are not children! We don't trifle! We live!—She demands that she be taken seriously. Her value gives her a perfect right to be.

SCHWARZ—What does she do, then?

SCHÖN—You have married half a million!

SCHWARZ—[*Rises; beside himself.*] She——?

SCHÖN—[*Takes him by the shoulder.*] No, that's not the way! [*Forces him to sit.*] We have a very grave matter here to discuss.

SCHWARZ—What does she do?

SCHÖN—First count over on your fingers all you have to thank her for, and then——

SCHWARZ—What does she do—man!

SCHÖN—And then make yourself responsible for your failings,—no one else.

SCHWARZ—With whom? With whom?

SCHÖN—If we should shoot each other——

SCHWARZ—Since when, then?

SCHÖN—[*Evasive.*] —I have not come here to make a scandal, but to rescue you from scandal.

SCHWARZ—[*Shaking his head.*] You have misunderstood her.

SCHÖN—[*Embarrassed.*] That gets us nowhere. I can't see you go on living in blindness. The girl deserves to be a respectable woman. Since I have known her she has improved as she developed.

SCHWARZ—Since you have known her? Since when have you known her then?

SCHÖN—Since about her twelfth year.

SCHWARZ—[*Bewildered.*] She never told me that.

SCHÖN—She used to sell flowers in front of the Alhambra Café. Every evening between twelve and two she would press in among the guests, bare-footed.

SCHWARZ—She told me nothing of that.

SCHÖN—She did right there. I'm telling you, so you may see that hers is not a case of moral degeneracy. The girl is, on the contrary, of extraordinarily good disposition.

SCHWARZ—She said she had grown up with an aunt.

SCHÖN—That was the woman I gave her to. She was her best pupil. The mothers used to make her an example to their children. She has the feeling for duty. It is simply and solely your mistake if you have till now neglected to appeal to the best in her.

SCHWARZ—[*Sobbing.*] O God!—

SCHÖN—[*With emphasis.*] No O God! Of the

happiness you have enjoyed nothing can be changed. The past is past. You overrate yourself against your better knowledge if you persuade yourself you will lose. You stand to gain. But with "O God" nothing is gained. I have never done you a greater kindness: I speak out plainly and offer you my help. Don't show yourself unworthy of it!

SCHWARZ—[*From now on more and more broken up.*] When I first knew her, she told me she had never loved before.

SCHÖN—When a widow says that—— It does her credit that she chose you for a husband. Make the same claims on yourself and your happiness is without a blot.

SCHWARZ—She says he had her wear short dresses.

SCHÖN—But he married her! That was her master-stroke. How she brought the man to it is beyond me. But you must know by now. You are enjoying the fruits of her diplomacy.

SCHWARZ—Where did Dr. Goll get to know her? How?

SCHÖN—Through me! It was after my wife's death, when I was making the first advances to my present fiancée. She thrust herself between us. She had set her heart on becoming my wife.

SCHWARZ—[*As if seized with a horrible suspicion.*] And then when her husband died?

SCHÖN—You married half a million!

SCHWARZ—[*Wailing.*] Oh, to have stayed where I was! To have died of hunger!

SCHÖN—[*Superior.*] Do you think, then, that I

make no compromises? Who is there that does not compromise? You have married half a million. You are to-day one of our foremost artists. Such things can't be done without money. You are not the man to sit in judgment on her. You can't possibly treat an origin like Mignon's according to the notions of bourgeois society.

SCHWARZ—[*Quite distraught.*] Whom are you speaking of?

SCHÖN—Of her father! You're an artist, I say: your ideals are on a different plane from those of a wage-worker.

SCHWARZ—I don't understand a word of all that.

SCHÖN—I am speaking of the inhuman conditions out of which, thanks to her good management, the girl has developed into what she is!

SCHWARZ—Who?

SCHÖN—Who? Your wife.

SCHWARZ—Eve?

SCHÖN—I called her Mignon.

SCHWARZ—I thought her name was Nellie?

SCHÖN—Dr. Goll called her so.

SCHWARZ—I called her Eve——

SCHÖN—What her real name is I don't know.

SCHWARZ—[*Absently.*] Perhaps she knows.

SCHÖN—With a father like hers, she is, with all her faults, an utter miracle. I don't understand you——

SCHWARZ—He died in a madhouse——

SCHÖN—He was here just now!

SCHWARZ—Who was here?

SCHÖN—Her father.

SCHWARZ—Here—in my home?

SCHÖN—He squeezed by me as I came in. And there are the two glasses still.

SCHWARZ—She says he died in the madhouse.

SCHÖN—[*Encouragingly.*] Let her feel your authority! Only make her render you unconditional obedience, and she asks no more. With Dr. Goll she was in heaven, and there was no joking him.

SCHWARZ—[*Shaking his head.*] She said she had never loved——

SCHÖN—But start with yourself. Pull yourself together!

SCHWARZ—She has sworn——

SCHÖN—You can't expect a sense of duty in her before you know your own task.

SCHWARZ—By her mother's grave!

SCHÖN—She never knew her mother, let alone the grave. Her mother hasn't got a grave.

SCHWARZ—I don't fit in society. [*He is in desperation.*]

SCHÖN—What's the matter?

SCHWARZ—Pain—horrible pain!

SCHÖN—[*Gets up, steps back; after a pause.*] Guard her for yourself, because she's yours.—The moment is decisive. To-morrow she may be lost to you.

SCHWARZ—[*Pointing to his breast.*] Here, here.

SCHÖN—You have married half—— [*Reflecting.*] She is lost to you if you let this moment slip!

SCHWARZ—If I could weep! Oh, if I could cry out!

SCHÖN—[*With a hand on his shoulder.*] You're suffering——

SCHWARZ—[*Getting up, apparently quiet.*] You are right, quite right.

SCHÖN—[*Gripping his hand.*] Where are you going?

SCHWARZ—To speak with her.

SCHÖN—Right! [*Accompanies him to the door, left. Coming back.*] That was tough work. [*After a pause, looking right.*] He had taken her into the studio before, tho. . . ? [*A fearful groan, left. He hurries to the door and finds it locked.*] Open! Open the door!

LULU—[*Stepping thru the hangings, right.*] What's——

SCHÖN—Open it!

LULU—[*Comes down the steps.*] That is horrible.

SCHÖN—Have you an ax in the kitchen?

LULU—He'll open it right off——

SCHÖN—I can't kick it in.

LULU—When he's had his cry out.

SCHÖN—[*Kicking the door.*] Open! [*To LULU.*] Bring me an ax.

LULU—Send for the doctor——

SCHÖN—You are not yourself.

LULU—It serves you right. [*Bell rings in the corridor. SCHÖN and LULU stare at each other.*]

Then SCHÖN slips up-stage and stands in the doorway.]

SCHÖN—I mustn't let myself be seen here now.

LULU—Perhaps it's the art-dealer. [*The bell rings again.*]

SCHÖN—But if we don't answer it—— [*LULU steals toward the door; but SCHÖN holds her.*] Stop. It sometimes happens that one is not just at hand— [*He goes out on tiptoe. LULU turns back to the locked door and listens. SCHÖN returns with ALVA.*] Please be quiet.

ALVA—[*Very excited.*] A revolution has broken out in Paris!

SCHÖN—Be quiet.

ALVA—[*To LULU.*] You're as pale as death.

SCHÖN—[*Rattling at the door.*] Walter! Walter! [*A death-rattle is heard behind the door.*]

LULU—God pity you.

SCHÖN—Haven't you brought an ax?

LULU—If there's one there—— [*Goes slowly out, upper left.*]

ALVA—He's just keeping us in suspense.

SCHÖN—A revolution has broken out in Paris?

ALVA—Up in the office the editors are tearing their hair. Not one of them knows what to write about it. [*The bell rings in the corridor.*]

SCHÖN—[*Kicking against the door.*] Walter!

ALVA—Shall I run against it?

SCHÖN—I can do that. Who may be coming now? [*Standing up.*] That's what it is to enjoy life and let others take the consequences!

LULU—[*Coming back with a kitchen-ax.*] Henriette has come home.

SCHÖN—Shut the door behind you.

ALVA—Give it here. [*Takes the ax and pounds with it between the jamb and the lock.*]

SCHÖN—You must hold it nearer the end.

ALVA—It's cracking— [*The lock gives; ALVA lets the ax fall and staggers back. Pause.*]

LULU—[*To SCHÖN, pointing to the door.*] After you. [*SCHÖN flinches, drops back.*] Are you getting—dizzy? [*SCHÖN wipes the sweat from his forehead and goes in.*]

ALVA—[*From the couch.*] Ghastly!

LULU—[*Stopping in the doorway, finger on lips, cries out sharply.*] Oh! Oh! [*Hurries to ALVA.*] I can't stay here.

ALVA—Horrible!

LULU—[*Taking his hand.*] Come.

ALVA—Where to?

LULU—I can't be alone. [*Goes out with ALVA, right. SCHÖN comes back, a bunch of keys in his hand, which shows blood. He pulls the door to, behind him, goes to the writing-table, opens it, and writes two notes.*]

ALVA—[*Coming back, right.*] She's changing her clothes.

SCHÖN—She has gone?

ALVA—To her room. She's changing her clothes. [*SCHÖN rings. HENRIETTE comes in.*]

SCHÖN—You know where Dr. Bernstein lives?

HENRIETTE—Of course, Doctor. Right next door.

SCHÖN—[*Giving her one note.*] Take that over to him, please.

HENRIETTE—In case the doctor is not at home?

SCHÖN—He is at home. [*Giving her the other note.*] And take this to police headquarters. Take a cab. [HENRIETTE *goes out.*] I am judged!

ALVA—My blood has congealed.

SCHÖN—[*Toward the left.*] The fool!

ALVA—He waked up to something, perhaps?

SCHÖN—He has been too much absorbed in himself. [LULU *appears on the steps, right, in dust-coat and hat.*]

ALVA—Where are you going now?

LULU—Out. I see it on all the walls.

SCHÖN—Where are his papers?

LULU—In the desk.

SCHÖN—[*At the desk.*] Where?

LULU—Lower right-hand drawer. [*She kneels and opens the drawer, emptying the papers on the floor.*] Here. There is nothing to fear. He had no secrets.

SCHÖN—Now I can just withdraw from the world.

LULU—[*Still kneeling.*] Write a pamphlet about him. Call him Michelangelo.

SCHÖN—What good'll that do? [*Pointing left.*] There lies my engagement.

ALVA—That's the curse of your game!

SCHÖN—Shout it through the streets!

ALVA—[*Pointing to LULU.*] If you had treated that girl fairly and justly when my mother died——

SCHÖN—My engagement is bleeding to death there!

LULU—[*Getting up.*] I shan't stay here any longer.

SCHÖN—In an hour they'll be selling extras. I dare not go across the street!

LULU—Why, what can you do to help it?

SCHÖN—That's just it! They'll stone me for it!

ALVA—You must get away—travel.

SCHÖN—To leave the scandal a free field!

LULU—[*By the couch.*] Ten minutes ago he was lying here.

SCHÖN—This is the reward for all I've done for him! In one second he wrecks my whole life for me!

ALVA—Control yourself, please!

LULU—[*On the couch.*] There's no one here but us.

ALVA—But look at us!

SCHÖN—[*To LULU.*] What do you want to tell the police?

LULU—Nothing.

ALVA—He didn't want to remain a debtor to his destiny.

LULU—He always had thoughts of death immediately.

SCHÖN—He had thoughts that an ordinary human can only dream of.

LULU—He has paid dearly for it.

ALVA—He had what we don't have!

SCHÖN—[*Suddenly violent.*] I know your motives! I have no cause to consider you! If you try every means to prevent having any brothers and

sisters, that's all the more reason why I should get more children.

ALVA—You've a poor knowledge of men.

LULU—You get out an extra yourself!

SCHÖN—[*With passionate indignation.*] He had no moral sense! [*Suddenly controlling himself again.*] Paris in revolution——?

ALVA—Our editors act as though they'd been struck. Everything has stopped dead.

SCHÖN—That's got to help me over this!—Now if only the police would come. The minutes are worth more than gold. [*The bell rings in the corridor.*]

ALVA—There they are—— [SCHÖN *starts to the door. LULU jumps up.*]

LULU—Wait, you've got blood——

SCHÖN—Where?

LULU—Wait, I'll wipe it. [*Sprinkles her handkerchief with heliotrope and wipes the blood from SCHÖN's hand.*]

SCHÖN—It's your husband's blood.

LULU—It leaves no trace.

SCHÖN—Monster!

LULU—You will marry me, all the same. [*The bell rings in the corridor.*] Only have patience, children. [SCHÖN *goes out and returns with ESCHERICH, a reporter.*]

ESCHERICH—[*Breathless.*] Allow me to—to introduce myself——

SCHÖN—You've run?

ESCHERICH—[*Giving him his card.*] From police headquarters. A suicide, I understand.

SCHÖN—[*Reads.*] “Fritz Escherich, correspondent of the ‘News and Novelties.’” Come along.

ESCHERICH—One moment. [*Takes out his notebook and pencil, looks around the parlor, writes a few words, bows to LULU, writes, turns to the broken door, writes.*] A kitchen-ax. [*Starts to lift it.*]

SCHÖN—[*Holding him back.*] Excuse me.

ESCHERICH—[*Writing.*] Door broken open with a kitchen-ax. [*Examines the lock.*]

SCHÖN—[*His hand on the door.*] Look before you, my dear sir.

ESCHERICH—Now if you will have the kindness to open the door—— [SCHÖN *opens it.* ESCHERICH *lets book and pencil fall, clutches at his hair.*] Merciful Heaven! God!

SCHÖN—Look it all over carefully.

ESCHERICH—I can’t look at it!

SCHÖN—[*Snorting scornfully.*] Then what did you come here for?

ESCHERICH—To—to cut up—to cut up his throat with a razor!

SCHÖN—Have you seen it all?

ESCHERICH—That must feel——

SCHÖN—[*Draws the door to, steps to the writing-table.*] Sit down. Here is paper and pen. Write.

ESCHERICH—[*Mechanically taking his seat.*] I can’t write——

SCHÖN—[*Behind his chair.*] Write! Persecution—mania. . . .

ESCHERICH—[*Writes.*] Per-secu-tion — mania.
[*The bell rings in the corridor.*]

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—*A theatrical dressing-room, hung with red.*

Door upper right. Across upper left corner, a Spanish screen. Centre, a table set endwise, on which dance costumes lie. Chair on each side of this table. Lower right, a smaller table, with a chair. Lower left, a high, very wide, old-fashioned arm-chair. Above it, a tall mirror, with a make-up stand before it holding puff, rouge, etc., etc.

ALVA is at lower right, filling two glasses with red wine and champagne.

ALVA—Never since I began to work for the stage have I seen the public so wildly enthusiastic.

LULU—[*Voice from behind the screen.*] Don't give me too much red wine. Will he see me to-day?

ALVA—Father?

LULU—Yes.

ALVA—I don't know if he's in the theater.

LULU—Doesn't he want to see me at all?

ALVA—He has so little time.

LULU—His bride occupies him.

ALVA—Speculations. He gives himself no rest.
[SCHÖN enters.] You? We're just speaking of you.

LULU—Is he there?

SCHÖN—You're changing?

LULU—[*Peeping over the Spanish screen, to SCHÖN.*] You write in all the papers that I'm the most gifted danseuse who ever trod the stage, a second Taglioni and I don't know what else—and you haven't once found me gifted enough to convince yourself of the fact.

SCHÖN—I have so much to write. You see, I was convincing to others: there are hardly any seats left.—You must keep rather more in the proscenium.

LULU—I must first accustom myself to the light.

ALVA—She has kept strictly to her part.

SCHÖN—[*To ALVA.*] You must get more out of your performers! You don't know enough yet about the technique. [*To LULU.*] What do you come as now?

LULU—As a flower-girl.

SCHÖN—[*To ALVA.*] In tights?

ALVA—No. In a skirt to the ankles.

SCHÖN—It would have been better if you hadn't bothered with symbolism.

ALVA—I look at a dancer's feet.

SCHÖN—The point is, what the public looks at. A vision like *h e r* has no need, praise God, of your symbolic mummery.

ALVA—The public doesn't look as if it were being bored!

SCHÖN—Of course not; because I have been working the press in her favor for the last six months. Has the Prince been here?

ALVA—Nobody's been here.

SCHÖN—Well, that's what you get for letting a dancer come on thru two acts in raincoats.

ALVA—Who is the Prince?

SCHÖN—Shall we see each other afterwards?

ALVA—Are you alone?

SCHÖN—With acquaintances. At Peter's?

ALVA—At twelve?

SCHÖN—At twelve. [*Exit.*]

LULU—I'd given up hoping that he'd ever come.

ALVA—Don't let yourself be misled by his grumpy growls. If you'll only be careful not to spend all your strength before the last number begins—
[*Lulu steps out in a classical, sleeveless dress, white with a red border, a bright wreath in her hair and a basket of flowers in her hands.*]

LULU—He doesn't seem to have noticed at all how cleverly you have deployed your performers.

ALVA—I won't blow in sun, moon and stars in the first act!

LULU—[*Sipping.*] You disclose me by degrees.

ALVA—And I was well aware that you knew all about changing costumes.

LULU—If I'd tried to sell my flowers so before the Alhambra café, they'd have had me behind lock and key right off the very first night.

ALVA—Why? You were a child!

LULU—Do you remember how I looked the first time I came into your room?

ALVA—You wore a dark blue dress with black velvet.

LULU—They had to stick me somewhere and didn't know where.

ALVA—My mother had been lying sick for two years already then.

LULU—You were playing theater, and asked me if I wanted to play, too.

ALVA—To be sure! We played theater!

LULU—I see you still—the way you shoved the figures back and forth.

ALVA—For a long time my most terrible memory was when all at once I saw clearly into your relations——

LULU—You got icy curt towards me then.

ALVA—Oh, God— I saw in you something so infinitely far above me. I had perhaps more veneration for you than for my mother. Think—when my mother died—I was seventeen—I went and stood before my father and demanded that he make you his wife on the spot or we'd have to fight a duel.

LULU—He told me that at the time.

ALVA—Since I've grown older, I can only pity him. He will never comprehend me. There he is making up a story for himself about a little diplomatic game that puts me in the rôle of laboring against his marriage with the Countess.

LULU—Does she still look out upon the world as innocently as ever?

ALVA—She loves him. I'm convinced of that. Her family has done everything to induce her to turn back. I don't think any sacrifice in the world would be too great for her to make for his sake.

LULU—[*Holds out her glass to him.*] A little more, please.

ALVA—[*Giving it to her.*] You're drinking too much.

LULU—He shall learn to believe in my success! He doesn't believe in art at all. He only believes in newspapers.

ALVA—He believes in nothing.

LULU—He brought me into the theater so that eventually someone might be found rich enough to marry me.

ALVA—Well, all right. Why need that trouble us?

LULU—I am to feel pleased if I can dance myself into a millionaire's heart.

ALVA—God forbid that anyone should snatch you from us!

LULU—You've composed the music for it, tho.

ALVA—You know that it was always my desire to write a piece for you.

LULU—I am not at all suited to the stage, however.

ALVA—You came into the world a dancer!

LULU—Then why don't you make your pieces as interesting as life is, at least?

ALVA—Because if we did no man would believe us.

LULU—If I hadn't known more about acting than people on the stage pretend to, what might not have happened to me?

ALVA—I provided your part with all the impossibilities imaginable, though.

LULU—Nobody in the real world is taken in by hocus-pocus like that.

ALVA—It's enough for me that the public finds itself most tremendously stirred up.

LULU—But *I'd* like to find myself most tremendously stirred up. [*Drinks.*]

ALVA—You don't seem to be in need of much more for that.

LULU—Can you wonder, since every one of my scenes has an ulterior purpose? There are some men down there debating with themselves very earnestly already.—I can feel that without looking.

ALVA—What does it feel like?

LULU—No one of them has any notion of the others. Each thinks that he alone is the unhappy victim.

ALVA—But how can you feel that?

LULU—One gets such an icy thrill running up one's body.

ALVA—You are incredible. [*An electric bell rings over the door.*]

LULU—My cape. . . . I shall keep in the proscenium!

ALVA—[*Putting a wide shawl round her shoulders.*] Here is your cape.

LULU—He shall have nothing more to fear for his shameless boosting.

ALVA—Keep yourself under control!

LULU—God grant that I dance the last sparks of intelligence out of their heads. [*Exit.*]

ALVA—Yes, a more interesting piece could be

written about her. [*Sits, right, and takes out his notebook. Writes. Looks up.*] First act: Dr. Goll. Rotten already! I can call up Dr. Goll from purgatory or wherever he's doing penance for his orgies, but I'll be made to answer for his sins. [*Long-continued but much deadened applause and bravos outside.*] That storm sounds like a menagerie when the meat appears at the cage!—Second act: Walter Schwarz. Still more impossible! How our souls do strip off their last coverings in the light of such lightning-strokes!—Third act?—Is it really to go on this way? [*The attendant opens the door from outside and lets ESCERNY enter. He acts as tho he were at home, and without greeting ALVA takes the chair near the mirror. ALVA continues, not heeding him.*] It can not go on this way in the third act!

ESCERNY—Up to the middle of the third act it didn't seem to be going so well to-day as sometimes.

ALVA—I was not on the stage.

ESCERNY—Now she's in full career again.

ALVA—She's lengthening each number.

ESCERNY—I once had the pleasure of meeting the artiste at Dr. Schön's house.

ALVA—My father introduced her to the public through certain critiques in his paper.

ESCERNY—[*Bowing slightly.*] I was conferring with Dr. Schön about the publication of my discoveries at Lake Tanganyika.

ALVA—[*Bowing slightly.*] From what he has let

drop there can be no doubt that he takes the liveliest interest in your book.

ESCERNY—One very good thing about the artiste is that the audience seems not to exist for her at all.

ALVA—As a child she learned the quick changing of clothes; but I was surprised to discover in her so important a danseuse.

ESCERNY—When she dances her solo she grows intoxicated with her own beauty,—she seems to be mortally love-sick of it herself.

ALVA—Here she comes. [*Gets up and opens the door. Enter LULU.*]

LULU—[*Without wreath or basket, to ALVA.*] You're called for. I was three times before the curtain. [*To ESCERNY.*] Dr. Schön is not in your box?

ESCERNY—Not in mine.

ALVA—[*To LULU.*] Didn't you see him?

LULU—He is probably away again.

ESCERNY—He has the furthest lower box on the left.

LULU—It seems he is ashamed of me!

ALVA—There wasn't a good seat left for him.

LULU—[*To ALVA.*] Ask him, though, if he likes me better now.

ALVA—I'll send him up.

ESCERNY—He applauded.

LULU—Did he really?

ALVA—Give yourself some rest. [*Exit.*]

LULU—I've got to change again now.

ESCERNY—But your dresser isn't here?

LULU—I can do it quicker alone. Where did you say Dr. Schön was sitting?

ESCERNY—I saw him in the left parquet-box farthest back.

LULU—I've still five costumes now before me; dancing-girl, ballerina, queen of the night, Ariel, and Lascaris. . . . [*She goes behind the Spanish screen.*]

ESCERNY—Would you think it possible that at our first encounter I expected nothing more than to make the acquaintance of a young lady of the literary world? . . . [*He sits at the left of the centre table, and remains there to the end of the scene.*] Have I perhaps erred in my judgment of your nature, or did I rightly interpret the smile which the thundering storms of applause called forth on your lips?—That you are secretly pained at the necessity of profaning your art before people of doubtful disinterestedness? [*LULU makes no answer.*] That you would gladly exchange the shimmer of publicity at every moment for a quiet, sunny happiness in distinguished seclusion? [*LULU makes no answer.*] That you feel you possess enough dignity and rank to fetter a man to your feet—in order to enjoy his utter helplessness? . . . [*LULU makes no answer.*] That in a comfortable, richly furnished villa you would feel in a more fitting place than here, —with unlimited means, to live completely as your own mistress? [*LULU steps forth in a short, bright, pleated petticoat and white satin bodice, black*

shoes and stockings, and spurs with bells at her heels.]

LULU—[*Busy with the lacing of her bodice.*] If there's just one evening I don't go on, I dream the whole night that I'm dancing and feel the next day as if I'd been racked.

ESCERNY—But what difference could it make to you to see before you instead of this mob o n e spectator, specially elect?

LULU—That would make no difference. I don't see anybody anyway.

ESCERNY—A lighted summer-house—the splashing of the water near at hand. . . . I am forced in my exploring-trips to the practice of a quite inhuman tyranny——

LULU—[*Putting on a pearl necklace before the mirror.*] A good school!

ESCERNY—And if I now long to deliver myself unreservedly into the power of a woman, that is a natural need for relaxation. . . . Can you imagine a greater life-happiness for a woman than to have a man entirely in her power?

LULU—[*Jingling her heels.*] Oh, yes!

ESCERNY—[*Disconcerted.*] Among men of culture you will not find one who can help losing his head over you.

LULU—Your wishes, however, no one can quite fulfil without deceiving you.

ESCERNY—To be deceived by a girl like you must be ten times more enrapturing than to be uprightly loved by anybody else.

LULU—You have not known what it was to be uprightly loved by any girl yet in all your life! [*Turning her back to him and pointing.*] Would you undo this knot for me? I've laced myself too tight. I am always so excited getting dressed.

ESCERNY—[*After repeated efforts.*] I'm sorry; I can't.

LULU—Then leave it. Perhaps I can. [*Goes left.*]

ESCERNY—I confess that I am lacking in deftness. Maybe I was a poor student in my relations with women.

LULU—And probably you don't have much opportunity in Africa, either?

ESCERNY—[*Seriously.*] Let me confess to you frankly that my isolation in the world embitters many an hour.

LULU—The knot is almost done. . . .

ESCERNY—What draws me to you is not your dancing. It's your physical and spiritual refinement, as revealed in every one of your movements. No one who takes the interest I do in works of art could be deceived as to that. For ten evenings I've been studying your spiritual life in your dance, until to-day when you entered as the flower-girl I became perfectly clear. Yours is a grand nature—unselfish; you can see no one suffer; you embody the joy of life. As a wife you will make a man happy above all things. . . . You are all open-heartedness. You would be a poor actor. [*The bell rings again.*]

LULU—[*Having somewhat loosened her laces, takes a deep breath and jingles her spurs.*] Now I can breathe again. The curtain is going up. [*She takes from the centre table a skirt-dance costume—of bright yellow silk, without a waist, closed at the neck, reaching to the ankles, with wide, loose sleeves—and throws it over her.*] I must dance.

ESCERNY—[*Rises and kisses her hand.*] Allow me to remain here a little while longer.

LULU—Please stay.

ESCERNY—I need a little solitude. [LULU *goes out.*] What is to be aristocratic? To be eccentric, like me? Or to be perfect in body and mind, like this girl? [*Applause and bravos outside.*] She gives me back my faith in humanity,—gives me back my life. Should not this woman's children be more princely, body and soul, than children whose mother has no more vitality in her than I have felt in me until to-day? [*Sitting, right; ecstatically.*] The dance has ennobled her body. . . . [ALVA *enters.*]

ALVA—One is never sure a moment that some miserable chance won't throw the whole performance out for good. [*He throws himself into the big chair, left, so that the two men are in exactly reversed positions from their former ones. Both converse somewhat boredly and apathetically.*]

ESCERNY—But the audience has never shown itself so responsive before.

ALVA—She's finished the skirt-dance.

ESCERNY—I hear her coming. . . .

ALVA—She isn't coming. She has no time. She changes her costume in the wings.

ESCERNY—She has two ballet-costumes, if I'm not mistaken?

ALVA—I find the white one more becoming to her than the rose-color.

ESCERNY—Do you?

ALVA—Don't you?

ESCERNY—I find she looks too bodiless in the white tulle.

ALVA—I find she looks too animal in the rose tulle.

ESCERNY—I don't find that.

ALVA—The white tulle brings out the child-like side of her nature more.

ESCERNY—The rose tulle brings out the womanly side of her nature more. [*The electric bell rings over the door. ALVA jumps up.*]

ALVA—For heaven's sake, what is wrong?

ESCERNY—[*Getting up too.*] What's the matter? [*The electric bell continues ringing till after they go out.*]

ALVA—Something's gone wrong there——

ESCERNY—How can you get so frightened all of a sudden?

ALVA—That must be a hellish confusion! [*He runs out. ESCERNY follows him. The door remains open. Faint dance-music heard. Pause. LULU enters in a long cloak, and shuts the door to behind her. She wears a rose-colored ballet costume with flower-garlands. She walks across the stage and sits down in the big arm-chair near the mirror. After a pause ALVA returns.*]

ALVA—You had a faint?

LULU—Please lock the door.

ALVA—At least come down to the stage.

LULU—Did you see him?

ALVA—See whom?

LULU—With his fiancée?

ALVA—With his—— [*To SCHÖN, who enters.*]

You might have spared yourself that jest!

SCHÖN—What's the matter with her? [*To LULU.*]

How can you play the scene straight at me!

LULU—I feel as if I'd been whipped.

SCHÖN—[*After bolting the door.*] You will dance—as sure as I've taken the responsibility for you!

LULU—Before your fiancée?

SCHÖN—Have you a right to trouble yourself before whom? You've been engaged here. You receive your salary . . .

LULU—Is that your affair?

SCHÖN—You dance for anyone who buys a ticket. Whom I sit with in my box has nothing to do with your business!

ALVA—I wish you'd stayed sitting in your box! [*To LULU.*] Tell me, please, what I am to do. [*A knock at the door.*] There is the manager. [*Calls.*] Yes, in a moment! [*To LULU.*] You won't compel us to break off the performance?

SCHÖN—[*To LULU.*] Onto the stage with you!

LULU—Let me have just a moment! I can't now. I'm utterly miserable.

ALVA—The devil take the whole theater crowd!

LULU—Put in the next number. No one will notice

if I dance now or in five minutes. There's no strength in my feet.

ALVA—But you will dance then?

LULU—As well as I can.

ALVA—As badly as you like. [*A knock at the door again.*] I'm coming.

LULU—[*When ALVA is gone.*] You are right to show me where I belong. You couldn't do it better than by letting me dance that skirt-dance before your fiancée. . . . You do me the greatest service when you point out to me where my place is.

SCHÖN—[*Sardonically.*] For you with your origin it's incomparable luck to still have the chance of appearing before respectable people!

LULU—Even when my shamelessness makes them not know where to look.

SCHÖN—Nonsense!—Shamelessness?—Don't make a necessity of virtue! Your shamelessness is what balances your every step with gold. One cries "bravo," another "fie"—it's all the same to you! Can you wish for a more brilliant triumph than when a respectable girl can hardly be kept in the box? Has your life any other aim? As long as you still have a spark of self-respect, you are no perfect dancer. The more terribly you make people shudder, the higher you stand in your profession!

LULU—And it is absolutely indifferent to me what they think of me. I don't, in the least, want to be any better than I am. I'm content with myself.

SCHÖN—[*In moral indignation.*] That is your true nature. That's straight!—Corruption!

LULU—I wouldn't have known that I had had a spark of self-respect——

SCHÖN—[*Suddenly distrustful.*] No harlequinading——

LULU—O Lord—I know very well what I'd have become if you hadn't saved me from it.

SCHÖN—Are you anything different then to-day?—heh?

LULU—God be thanked, no!

SCHÖN—Just so!

LULU—[*Laughs.*] And how awfully glad of it I am!

SCHÖN—[*Spits.*] Will you dance now?

LULU—In anything, before anyone!

SCHÖN—Then down to the stage!

LULU—[*Begging like a child.*] Just a minute more! Please! I can't stand up straight yet. They'll ring.

SCHÖN—You have become what you are in spite of everything I sacrificed for your education and your welfare.

LULU—Had you overrated your ennobling influence?

SCHÖN—Spare me your witticisms.

LULU—The Prince was here.

SCHÖN—Well?

LULU—He takes me with him to Africa.

SCHÖN—Africa?

LULU—Why not? Didn't you make me a dancer just so that someone might come and take me away with him?

SCHÖN—But not to Africa, though!

LULU—Then why didn't you calmly let me fall in a faint, and mutely thank the Lord for it?

SCHÖN—Because, more's the pity, I had no reason for believing in your faint!

LULU—[*Making fun of him.*] You couldn't bear it any longer out front there?

SCHÖN—Because I had to bring home to you what you are and to whom you are not to look up.

LULU—You were afraid, though, that my legs might possibly have been really injured?

SCHÖN—I know too well you are indestructible.

LULU—So you know that?

SCHÖN—[*Bursting out.*] Don't look at me so impudently!

LULU—No one is keeping you here.

SCHÖN—I'm going as soon as the bell rings.

LULU—As soon as you have the energy! Where is your energy? You have been engaged three years. Why don't you marry? You recognize no obstacles. Why do you try to put the blame on me? You ordered me to marry Dr. Goll: I forced Dr. Goll to marry me. You ordered me to marry the painter: I made the best of a bad bargain. Artists are your creatures, princes your protégés. Why don't you marry?

SCHÖN—[*Raging.*] Do you imagine you stand in the way?

LULU—[*From here to the end of the act triumphant.*] If you knew how happy your rage is making me! How proud I am that you take every means to

humble me! You push me down as low—as low as a woman can be debased to, for then, you hope, you can sooner get over me. But you have suffered unspeakably yourself from everything you said just now to me. I see it in your eyes. Already you are near the end of your composure. Go! For your innocent fiancée's sake, leave me alone! One minute more and your mood will change, and then you'll make a scene with me of another kind, that you can't answer for now.

SCHÖN—I fear you no longer.

LULU—Me? Fear yourself! I do not need you! I beg you to go! Don't give me the blame. You know that I don't need to faint to destroy your future. You have unlimited confidence in my honorableness. You believe not only that I'm an ensnaring daughter of Eve; you believe, too, that I'm a very good-natured creature. I am neither the one nor the other. The bad thing for you is that you think I am.

SCHÖN—[*Desperate.*] Leave my thoughts alone! You have two husbands under the sod. Take the Prince, dance him into the ground. I am through with you. I know where the angel in you leaves off and the devil begins. If I take the world as it's made, the Creator must bear the responsibility, not I! To me life is not an amusement!

LULU—And, therefore, you make claims upon life greater than anyone can make. . . . Tell me, who of us two is more full of claims and demands, you or I?

SCHÖN—Be silent! I don't know how or what I think. When I hear you, I don't think any more. In a week I'll be married. I conjure you, by the angel that is in you, during that time come no more to my sight!

LULU—I will lock my doors.

SCHÖN—Go on and boast! God knows that since I began wrestling with the world and with life I have cursed no one like you!

LULU—That comes from my lowly origin.

SCHÖN—From your depravity!

LULU—With a thousand pleasures I take the blame on myself! You must feel clean now; you must think yourself a model of austerity now, a paragon of unflinching principle—or else you can't marry the child at all in her boundless inexperience——

SCHÖN—Do you want me to grab you and——

LULU—Yes! Yes! What must I say to make you? Not for the world now would I exchange with the innocent child! Besides, the girl loves you as no woman has ever loved you yet!

SCHÖN—Silence, beast! Silence!

LULU—Marry her—and then she'll dance in her childish wretchedness before my eyes, instead of I before hers!

SCHÖN—[*Raising his fists.*] God forgive me——

LULU—Strike me! Where is your riding-whip? Strike me on the legs——

SCHÖN—[*Grasping his temples.*] Away, away!
[*Rushes to the door, recollects himself, turns*

around.] Can I go before the girl now, this way? Home!—If I could only slip out of the world!

LULU—Be a man! Look yourself in the face once:—you have no trace of a conscience; you shrink back from no wickedness; in the most cold-blooded way you are meaning to make the girl that loves you unhappy. You conquer half the world; you do what you please;—and you know as well as I that——

SCHÖN—[*Sunk in the chair, right centre, utterly exhausted.*] Stop.

LULU—That you are too weak—to tear yourself away from me.

SCHÖN—[*Groaning.*] Oh! Oh! You make me weep.

LULU—This moment makes me I cannot tell you how glad.

SCHÖN—My age! My position!

LULU—He cries like a child—the terrible man of might. Now go so to your bride and tell her what kind of a girl I am at heart—not a bit jealous!

SCHÖN—[*Sobbing.*] The child! The innocent child!

LULU—How can the incarnate devil get so weak all of a sudden!—But now go, please. You are nothing more now to me.

SCHÖN—I cannot go to her.

LULU—Out with you. Come to me again when you have got back your strength.

SCHÖN—Tell me in God's name what I must do.

LULU—[*Gets up; her cloak remains on the chair. Shoving aside the costumes on the centre table.*]

Here is writing-paper——

SCHÖN—I can't write. . . .

LULU—[*Upright behind him, her arm on the back of his chair.*] Write! "My dear Countess . . ."

SCHÖN—[*Hesitating.*] I call her Adelheid . . .

LULU—[*With emphasis.*] "My dear Countess . . ."

SCHÖN—My sentence of death! [*He writes.*]

LULU—"Take back your promise. I cannot reconcile it with my conscience——" [SCHÖN *drops the pen and glances up at her entreatingly.*] Write "conscience"! "—to fetter you to my unhappy lot. . . ."

SCHÖN—[*Writing.*] You are right. You are right.

LULU—"I give you my word that I am unworthy of your love——" [SCHÖN *turns round again.*] Write "love"! "These lines are the proof of it. For three years I have tried to tear myself free; I have not the strength. I am writing you at the side of the woman who commands me. Forget me. Dr. Ludwig Schön."

SCHÖN—[*Groaning.*] O God!

LULU—[*Half startled.*] No, no O God! [*With emphasis.*] "Dr. Ludwig Schön." Postscript: "Do not attempt to save me."

*SCHÖN—[*Having written to the end, quite collapses.*] Now—comes the—execution.

ACT IV

SCENE—*A splendid hall in German Renaissance style, with a heavy ceiling of carved oak. The lower half of the walls of dark carved wood; the upper half on both sides hung with faded Gobelins. At rear, a curtained gallery from which, at right, a monumental staircase descends to halfway down stage. At centre, under the gallery, the entrance-door, with twisted posts and pediment. At left, a high and spacious fireplace with a Chinese folding screen before it. Further down, left, a French window onto a balcony with heavy curtains, closed. Down right, door hung with Genoese velvet. Near it, a broad ottoman, with an arm-chair on its left. Behind, near the foot of the stairs, LULU's Pierrot-picture on a decorative stand and in a gold frame made to look antique. In the centre of the hall, down-stage, a heavy square table, with three high-backed upholstered chairs round it and a vase of white flowers on it.*

COUNTESS GESCHWITZ *sits on the ottoman, in a soldier-like, fur-trimmed waist, high, upstanding collar, enormous cufflinks, a veil over her face, and her hands clasped convulsively in her muff. SCHÖN stands down right. LULU, in a big-flowered morning-dress, her hair in a simple*

knot in a golden circlet, sits in the arm-chair left of the ottoman.

GESCHWITZ—[*To LULU.*] You can't think how glad I shall be to see you at our lady artists' ball.

SCHÖN—Is there no sort of possibility of a person like me smuggling in?

GESCHWITZ—It would be high treason if any of us lent herself to such an intrigue.

SCHÖN—[*Crossing to the centre table, behind the ottoman.*] The glorious flowers!

LULU—Fräulein von Geschwitz brought me those.

GESCHWITZ—Don't mention it.—Oh, you'll be in man's costume, won't you?

LULU—Do you think that becomes me?

GESCHWITZ—You're a dream here. [*Signifying the picture.*]

LULU—My husband doesn't like it.

GESCHWITZ—Is it by a local man?

LULU—You will hardly have known him.

GESCHWITZ—No longer living?

SCHÖN—[*Down left, with a deep voice.*] He had enough.

LULU—You're in bad temper. [SCHÖN controls himself.]

GESCHWITZ—[*Getting up.*] I must go, Mrs. Schön. I can't stay any longer. This evening we have life-class, and I have still so much to get ready for the ball. Good-bye, Dr. Schön. [*Exit, up-stage. LULU accompanies her. SCHÖN looks around him.*]

SCHÖN—Pure Augean stable. That, the end of my life. Show me one corner that's still clean! The pest in the house. The poorest day-laborer has his tidy nest. Thirty years' work, and this my family circle, the home of my—— [*Glancing round.*] God knows who is overhearing me again now! [*Draws a revolver from his breast pocket.*] Man is, indeed, uncertain of his life! [*The cocked revolver in his right hand, he goes left and speaks at the closed window-curtains.*] That, my family circle! The fellow still has courage! Shall I not rather shoot myself in the head? Against deadly enemies one fights, but the—— [*Throws up the curtains, but finds no one hidden behind them.*] The dirt—the dirt. . . . [*Shakes his head and crosses right.*] Insanity has already conquered my reason, or else—exceptions prove the rule! [*Hearing LULU coming he puts the revolver back in his pocket. LULU comes down to him.*]

LULU—Couldn't you get away for this afternoon?

SCHÖN—Just what did that Countess want?

LULU—I don't know. She wants to paint me.

SCHÖN—Misfortune in human guise, paying her respects!

LULU—Couldn't you get away, then? I would so like to drive through the grounds with you.

SCHÖN—Just the day when I must be at the Exchange. You know that I'm not free to-day. All my property is drifting on the waves.

LULU—I'd sooner be dead and buried than let my life be embittered so by my property.

SCHÖN—Who takes life lightly does not take death hard.

LULU—As a child I always had the most horrible fear of death.

SCHÖN—That is just why I married you.

LULU—[*With her arms round his neck.*] You're in bad humor. You invent too many worries. For weeks and months I've seen nothing of you.

SCHÖN—[*Stroking her hair.*] Your light-heartedness should cheer up my old days.

LULU—Indeed, you didn't marry me at all.

SCHÖN—Whom else did I marry then?

LULU—I married you!

SCHÖN—How does that alter anything?

LULU—I was always afraid it would alter a great deal.

SCHÖN—It has, indeed, crushed a great deal underfoot.

LULU—But not one thing, praise God!

SCHÖN—Of that I should be covetous.

LULU—Your love for me. [SCHÖN's face twitches, he signs to her to go out in front of him. Both exeunt lower right. COUNTESS GESCHWITZ cautiously opens the rear door, ventures forth, and listens. Hearing voices approaching in the gallery above her, she starts suddenly.]

GESCHWITZ—Oh, dear, there's somebody——
[*Hides behind the fire-screen.*]

•SCHIGOLCH—[*Steps out from the curtains onto the stairs, turns back.*] Has the youngster left his heart behind him in the Nightlight Café?

RODRIGO—[*Between the curtains.*] He is still too small for the great world, and can't walk so far on foot yet. [*He disappears.*]

SCHIGOLCH—[*Coming down the stairs.*] God be thanked we're home again at last! What damned skunk has waxed the stairs again? If I have to have my joints set in plaster again before being called home, she can just stick me up between the palms here and present me to her relations as the Venus de' Medici. Nothing but steep rocks and stumbling blocks!

RODRIGO—[*Comes down the stairs, carrying HUGENBERG in his arms.*] This thing has a royal police-captain for a father and not as much spunk in his body as the raggedest hobo!

HUGENBERG—If there was nothing more to it than life and death, then you'd soon learn to know me!

RODRIGO—Even with his lover's woe, little brother don't weigh more than sixty kilos. On the truth o' that I'll let 'em hang me any time.

SCHIGOLCH—Throw him up to the ceiling and catch him by the feet. That'll snap his young blood into the proper fizz right from the start.

HUGENBERG—[*Kicking his legs.*] Hooray, hooray, I shall be expelled from school!

RODRIGO—[*Setting him down at the foot of the stairs.*] You've never been to any sensible school yet.

SCHIGOLCH—Here many a man has won his spurs before you. Only, no timidity! First, I'll set before

you a drop of what can't be had anywhere for money.
[*Opens a cupboard under the stairs.*]

HUGENBERG—Now if she doesn't come dancing in on the instant, I'll wallop you two so you'll still rub your tails in the hereafter.

RODRIGO—[*Seated left of the table.*] The strongest man in the world little brother will wallop! Let mama put long trousers on you first. [HUGENBERG sits opposite him.]

HUGENBERG—I'd rather you lent me your mustache.

RODRIGO—Maybe you want her to throw you out of the door straight off?

HUGENBERG—If I only knew now what the devil I was going to say to her!

RODRIGO—That she knows best herself.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Putting two bottles and three glasses on the table.*] I started in on one of them yesterday. [Fills the glasses.]

RODRIGO—[*Guarding HUGENBERG's.*] Don't give him too much, or we'll both have to pay for it.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Supporting himself with both hands on the table-top.*] Will the gentlemen smoke?

HUGENBERG—[*Opening his cigar-case.*] Havana-imported!

RODRIGO—[*Helping himself.*] From papa police-captain?

SCHIGOLCH—[*Sitting.*] Everything in the house is mine. You only need to ask.

HUGENBERG—I made a poem to her yesterday

RODRIGO—What did you make to her?

SCHIGOLCH—What did he make to her?

HUGENBERG—A poem.

RODRIGO—[*To SCHIGOLCH.*] A poem.

SCHIGOLCH—He's promised me a dollar if I can spy out where he can meet her alone.

HUGENBERG—Just who does live here?

RODRIGO—Here we live!

SCHIGOLCH—Jour fix—every stock-market day! Our health. [*They clink.*]

HUGENBERG—Should I read it to her first, maybe?

SCHIGOLCH—[*To RODRIGO.*] What's he mean?

RODRIGO—His poem. He'd like to stretch her out and torture her a little first.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Staring at HUGENBERG.*] His eyes! His eyes!

RODRIGO—His eyes, yes. They've robbed her of sleep for a week.

SCHIGOLCH—[*To RODRIGO.*] You can have yourself pickled.

RODRIGO—We can both have ourselves pickled! Our health, gossip Death!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Clinking with him.*] Health, jack-in-the-box! If it's still better later on, I'm ready for departure at any moment; but—but—— [LULU enters right, in an elegant Parisian ball-dress; much décolleté, with flowers in breast and hair.]

LULU—But children, children, I expect company!

SCHIGOLCH—But I can tell you what, those things must cost something over there! [HUGENBERG has risen. LULU sits on the arm of his chair.]

LULU—You've fallen into pretty company.—I expect visitors, children!

SCHIGOLCH—I guess I've got to stick something in there myself, too. [*He searches among the flowers on the table.*]

LULU—Do I look well?

SCHIGOLCH—What are those you've got there?

LULU—Orchids. [*Bending over HUGENBERG.*] Smell.

RODRIGO—Do you expect Prince Escerny?

LULU—[*Shaking her head.*] God forbid!

RODRIGO—So somebody else again——!

LULU—The Prince has gone traveling.

RODRIGO—To put his kingdom up for auction?

LULU—He's exploring a fresh string of tribes in the neighborhood of Africa. [*Rises, hurries up the stairs, and steps into the gallery.*]

RODRIGO—[*To SCHIGOLCH.*] He really wanted to marry her originally.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Sticking a lily in his buttonhole.*] I, too, wanted to marry her originally.

RODRIGO—You wanted to marry her originally?

SCHIGOLCH—Didn't you, too, want to marry her originally?

RODRIGO—You bet I wanted to marry her originally!

SCHIGOLCH—Who has not wanted to marry her originally!

• RODRIGO—I could never have done better!

SCHIGOLCH—She hasn't let anybody be sorry that he didn't marry her.

RODRIGO— . . . Then she's not your child?

SCHIGOLCH—Never occurs to her.

HUGENBERG—What is her father's name then?

SCHIGOLCH—She's just boasted of me!

HUGENBERG—What is her father's name then?

SCHIGOLCH—What's he say?

RODRIGO—What her father's name is.

SCHIGOLCH—She never had one.

LULU—[*Comes down from the gallery and sits again on HUGENBERG's chair-arm.*] What have I never had?

ALL THREE—A father.

LULU—Yes, sure—I'm a wonder-child. [*To HUGENBERG.*] How are you getting along with your father? Contented?

RODRIGO—He smokes a respectable cigar, anyway, the police-captain.

SCHIGOLCH—Have you locked up upstairs?

LULU—There is the key.

SCHIGOLCH—Better have left it in the lock.

LULU—Why?

SCHIGOLCH—So no one can unlock it from outside.

RODRIGO—Isn't he at the stock-exchange?

LULU—Oh, yes, but he suffers from persecution-mania.

RODRIGO—I take him by the feet, and yup!—there he stays sticking to the roof.

LULU—He hunts you into a mouse-hole with the corner of his eye.

RODRIGO—What does he hunt? Who does he hunt? [*Baring his arm.*] Just look at this biceps!

LULU—Show me. [*Goes left.*]

RODRIGO—[*Hitting himself on the muscle.*]
Granite. Wrought-iron!

LULU—[*Feeling by turns RODRIGO's arm and her own.*] If you only didn't have such long ears——

FERDINAND—[*Entering, rear centre.*] Doctor¹
Schön!

RODRIGO—The rogue! [*Jumps up, starts behind the fire-screen, recoils.*] God preserve me! [*Hides, lower left, behind the curtains.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Give me the key! [*Takes it and drags himself up the stairs.*]

LULU—[*HUGENBERG having slid under the table.*]
Show him in!

HUGENBERG—[*Under the front edge of the table-cloth, listening; to himself.*] If he doesn't stay—we'll be alone.

LULU—[*Poking him with her toe.*] Sh! [*HUGENBERG disappears. ALVA is shown in by FERDINAND.*]

ALVA—[*In evening dress.*] Methinks the matinee will take place by burning lamplight. I've——
[*Notices SCHIGOLCH painfully climbing the stairs.*]
What the —— is that?

LULU—An old friend of your father's.

ALVA—Quite unknown to me.

LULU—They were in the campaign together. He's awfully badly——

ALVA—Is my father here then?

LULU—He drank a glass with him. He had to go

¹ That is, since Act III Alva has won his Ph.D.

to the stock market. We'll have lunch before we go, won't we?

ALVA—When does it begin?

LULU—After two. [ALVA *still follows SCHIGOLCH with his eyes.*] How do you like me? [SCHIGOLCH *disappears thru the gallery.*]

ALVA—Had I not better be silent to you on that point?

LULU—I only mean my appearance.

ALVA—Your dressmaker manifestly knows you better than I—may permit myself to know you.

LULU—When I saw myself in the glass I could have wished to be a man—my man! . . .

ALVA—You seem to envy your man the delight you offer to him. [LULU *is at the right, ALVA at the left, of the centre table. He regards her with shy satisfaction. FERDINAND enters, rear, covers the table and lays two plates, etc., a bottle of Pommery, and hors d'œuvres.*] Have you a toothache?

LULU—[*Across to ALVA.*] Don't.

FERDINAND—Doctor Schön . . .?

ALVA—He seems so puckered-up and tearful to-day.

FERDINAND—[*Thru his teeth.*] One is only a man after all. [*Exit.*]

LULU—[*When both are seated.*] What I always think most highly of in you is your firmness of character. You're so perfectly sure of yourself. Even when you must have been afraid of falling out with your father on my account, you always stood up for me like a brother just the same.

ALVA—Let's drop that. It's just my fate—
[*Moves to lift up the tablecloth in front.*]

LULU—[*Quickly.*] That was me.

ALVA—Impossible!—It's just my fate, with the most trivial thoughts always to attain the best.

LULU—You deceive yourself if you make yourself out worse than you are.

ALVA—Why do you flatter me so? It is true that perhaps there is no man living, so bad as I—who has brought about so much good.

LULU—In any case you're the only man in the world who's protected me without lowering me in my own eyes!

ALVA—Do you think that so easy? [*SCHÖN appears in the gallery cautiously parting the hangings between the middle pillars. He starts, and whispers, "My own son!"*] With gifts from God like yours, one turns those around one to criminals without ever dreaming of it. I, too, am only flesh and blood, and if we hadn't grown up with each other like brother and sister——

LULU—And that's why I only give myself to you alone quite without reserve. From you I have nothing to fear.

ALVA—I assure you there are moments when one expects to see one's whole inner self cave in. The more self-suppression a man loads onto himself, the easier he breaks down. Nothing will save him from it except—— [*Stops to look under the table.*]

LULU—[*Quickly.*] What are you looking for?

ALVA—I conjure you, let me keep my confession

of faith to myself! As an inviolable sanctity you were more to me than with all your gifts you could be to anyone else in your life!

LULU—How extraordinarily different your mind is, on that, from your father's! [FERDINAND *enters, rear, changes the plates and serves broiled chicken with salad.*]

ALVA—[*To him.*] Are you sick?

LULU—[*To ALVA.*] Let him be!

ALVA—He's trembling as if he had fever.

FERDINAND—I am not yet so used to waiting. . . .

ALVA—You must have something prescribed for you.

FERDINAND—[*Thru his teeth.*] I'm a coachman usually——[*Exit.*]

SCHÖN—[*Whispering from the gallery.*] So, he too. [Seats himself behind the rail, able to cover himself with the hangings.]

LULU—What sort of moments are those of which you spoke, where one expects to see his whole inner self tumble in?

ALVA—I didn't want to speak of them. I should not like to lose, in joking over a glass of champagne, what has been my highest happiness for ten years.

LULU—I have hurt you. I don't want to begin on that again.

ALVA—Do you promise me that for always?

LULU—My hand on it. [*Gives him her hand across the table. ALVA takes it hesitatingly, grips it in his, and presses it long and ardently to his lips.*]

What are you doing? [RODRIGO *sticks his head out from the curtains, left.* LULU *darts an angry look at him across ALVA, and he draws back.*]

SCHÖN—[*Whispering from the gallery.*] And there is still another!

ALVA—[*Holding the hand.*] A soul—that in the hereafter will rub the sleep out of its eyes. . . . Oh, this hand. . . .

LULU—[*Innocently.*] What do you find in it? . . .

ALVA—An arm. . . .

LULU—What do you find in it? . . .

ALVA—A body. . . .

LULU—[*Guilelessly.*] What do you find in it? . . .

ALVA—[*Stirred up.*] Mignon!

LULU—[*Wholly ingenuously.*] What do you find in it? . . .

ALVA—[*Passionately.*] Mignon! Mignon!

LULU—[*Throws herself on the ottoman.*] Don't look at me so—for God's sake! Let us go before it is too late. You're an infamous wretch!

ALVA—I told you, didn't I, I was the basest villain. . . .

LULU—I see that!

ALVA—I have no sense of honor, no pride. . . .

LULU—You think I am your equal!

ALVA—You?—you are as heavenly high above me as—as the sun is over the abyss! [*Kneeling.*] Destroy me! I beg you, put an'end to me! Put an end to me!

LULU—Do you love me then?

ALVA—I will pay you with everything that was mine!

LULU—Do you love me?

ALVA—Do you love me—Mignon?

LULU—I? Not a soul.

ALVA—I love you. [*Hides his face in her lap.*]

LULU—[*Both hands in his hair.*] I poisoned your mother—— [*RODRIGO sticks his head out from the curtains, left, sees SCHÖN sitting in the gallery and signs to him to watch LULU and ALVA. SCHÖN points his revolver at RODRIGO; RODRIGO signs to him to point it at ALVA. SCHÖN cocks the revolver and takes aim. RODRIGO draws back behind the curtains. LULU sees him draw back, sees SCHÖN sitting in the gallery, and gets up.*] His father! [*SCHÖN rises, lets the hangings fall before him. ALVA remains motionless on his knees. Pause.*]

SCHÖN—[*A newspaper in his hand, takes ALVA by the shoulder.*] Alva! [*ALVA gets up as though drunk with sleep.*] A revolution has broken out in Paris.

ALVA—To Paris . . . let me go to Paris——

SCHÖN—Up in the office the editors are tearing their hair. Not one of them knows what to write about it. [*He unfolds the paper and accompanies ALVA out, rear. RODRIGO rushes out from the curtains toward the stairs.*]

LULU—[*Barring his way.*] You can't get out here.

RODRIGO—Let me through!

LULU—You'll run into his arms.

RODRIGO—He'll shoot me thru the head!

LULU—He's coming.

RODRIGO—[*Stumbling back.*] Devil, death and demons! [*Lifts the tablecloth.*]

HUGENBERG—No room!

RODRIGO—Damned and done for! [*Looks around and hides in the doorway, right.*]

SCHÖN—[*Comes in, centre; locks the door; and goes, revolver in hand, to the window down left, of which he throws up the curtains.*] Where is he gone?

LULU—[*On the lowest step.*] Out.

SCHÖN—Down over the balcony?

LULU—He's an acrobat.

SCHÖN—That could not be foreseen. [*Turning against LULU.*] You who drag me thru the muck of the streets to a tortured death!

LULU—Why did you not bring me up better?

SCHÖN—You destroying angel! You inexorable fate!—To turn murderer or else to drown in filth; to take ship like a fleeing convict, or hang myself over the mire!—You joy of my old age! You hangman's noose!

LULU—[*In cold blood.*] Oh, shut up, and kill me!

SCHÖN—Everything I possess I have made over to you, and asked nothing but the respect that every servant pays to my house. Your credit is exhausted!

LULU—I can answer for my account for years to come. [*Coming forward from the stairs.*] How do you like my new gown?

SCHÖN—Away with you, or my brains will crack to-morrow and my son swim in his blood! You infect me like an incurable pest in which I shall groan away the rest of my life. I will cure myself! Do you understand? [*Pressing the revolver on her.*] This is your physic. Don't break down; don't kneel! You yourself shall apply it. You or I—which is it to be? [*LULU, her strength threatening to desert her, has sunk down on the couch, turning the revolver this way and that.*]

LULU—It doesn't go off.

SCHÖN—Do you still recall how I snatched you out of the clutches of the police?

LULU—You have great confidence——

SCHÖN—Because I'm not afraid of a street-girl? Shall I guide your hand for you? Have you no mercy towards yourself? [*LULU points the revolver at him.*] No false alarms! [*LULU fires a shot into the ceiling. RODRIGO springs out of the portières, up the stairs and away thru the gallery.*] What was that?

LULU—[*Innocently.*] Nothing.

SCHÖN—[*Lifting the portières.*] What flew out of here?

LULU—You're suffering from persecution-mania.

SCHÖN—Have you got still more men hidden here? [*Tearing the revolver from her.*] Is yet another man calling on you? [*Going left.*] I'll regale your men! [*Throws up the window-curtains, flings the fire-screen back, grabs COUNTESS GESCHWITZ by the collar and drags her forward.*] Did you come down the chimney?

GESCHWITZ—[*In deadly terror, to LULU.*] Save me from him!

SCHÖN—[*Shaking her.*] Or are you, too, an acrobat?

GESCHWITZ—[*Whimpering.*] You hurt me.

SCHÖN—[*Shaking her.*] Now you will have to stay to dinner. [*Drags her right, shoves her into the next room and locks the door after her.*] We want no town-criers. [*Sits next LULU and makes her take the revolver again.*] There's still enough for you in it. Look at me! I cannot assist the coachman in my house to decorate my forehead for me. Look at me! I pay my coachman. Look at me! Am I doing the coachman a favor if I can't bear the vile stable-stench?

LULU—Have the carriage got ready! Please! We're going to the opera.

SCHÖN—We're going to the devil! Now I am coachman. [*Turning the revolver in her hand from himself to LULU's breast.*] Do you believe that anyone, abused as you have abused me, would hesitate between an old age of slavish infamy and the merit of freeing the world from you? [*Holds her down by the arm.*] Come, get through. It shall be the happiest remembrance of my life. Pull the trigger!

LULU—You can get a divorce.

SCHÖN—Only that was left! In order that tomorrow the next man may find his pastime where I have shuddered from pit to pit, suicide upon my neck and you before me! You dare suggest that? That part of my life I have poured into you, am I

to see it tossed before wild beasts? Do you see your bed with the sacrifice—the victim—on it? The lad is homesick for you. Did you let yourself be divorced? You trod him under your feet, knocked out his brains, caught up his blood in gold-pieces. I let myself be divorced? Can one be divorced when two people have grown into one another and half the man must go too? [*Reaching for the revolver.*] Give it here!

LULU—Don't!

SCHÖN—I'll spare you the trouble.

LULU—[*Tears herself loose, holding the revolver down; in a determined, self-possessed tone.*] If men have killed themselves for my sake, that doesn't lower my value. You knew quite as well why you made me your wife as I knew why I took you for husband. You had deceived your best friends with me; you could not well go on deceiving yourself with me. If you bring me your old age in sacrifice, you have had my whole youth in return. You understand ten times better than I do which is the more valuable. I have never in the world wished to seem to be anything different from what I am taken for, and I have never in the world been taken for anything different from what I am. You want to force me to fire a bullet into my heart. I'm not sixteen any more, but to fire a bullet in my heart I am still much too young!

SCHÖN — [*Pursuing her.*] Down, murderess! Down with you! To your knees, murderess! [*Crowding her to the foot of the stairs.*] Down,

and never dare to stand again! [*Raising his hand. LULU has sunk to her knees.*] Pray to God, murderess, that he give you strength. Sue to heaven that strength for it may be lent you! [*HUGENBERG jumps up from under the table, knocking a chair aside, and screams "Help!" SCHÖN whirls toward him, turning his back to LULU, who instantly fires five shots into him and continues to pull the trigger. SCHÖN, tottering over, is caught by HUGENBERG and let down in the chair.*]

SCHÖN—And—there—is—one—more——

LULU—[*Rushing to SCHÖN.*] All merciful——!

SCHÖN—Out of my sight! Alva!

LULU—[*Kneeling.*] The one man I loved!

SCHÖN—Harlot! Murderess!—Alva! Alva!—
Water!

LULU—Water; he's thirsty. [*Fills a glass with champagne and sets it to SCHÖN's lips. ALVA comes thru the gallery, down the stairs.*]

ALVA—Father! O God, my father!

LULU—I shot him.

HUGENBERG—She is innocent!

SCHÖN—[*To ALVA.*] You! It miscarried.

ALVA—[*Tries to lift him.*] You must get to bed; come.

SCHÖN—Don't take hold of me so! I'm drying up. [*LULU comes with the champagne-cup; to her.*] You are still like yourself. [*After drinking.*] Don't let her escape. [*To ALVA.*] You are the next.

ALVA—[*To HUGENBERG.*] Help me carry him to bed.

SCHÖN—No, no, please, no. Wine, murderess——

ALVA—[*To HUGENBERG.*] Take hold of him on that side. [*Pointing right.*] Into the bedroom. [*They lift SCHÖN upright and lead him right. LULU stays near the table, the glass in her hand.*]

SCHÖN—[*Groaning.*] O God! O God! O God! [*ALVA finds the door locked, turns the key and opens it. COUNTESS GESCHWITZ steps out. SCHÖN at the sight of her straightens up, stiffly.*] The Devil. [*He falls backward onto the carpet. LULU throws herself down, takes his head in her lap, and kisses him.*]

LULU—He has got thru. [*Gets up and starts toward the stairs.*]

ALVA—Don't stir!

GESCHWITZ—I thought it was you.

LULU—[*Throwing herself before ALVA.*] You can't give me up to the law! It is my head that is struck off. I shot him because he was about to shoot me. I have loved nobody in the world but him! Alva, demand what you will, only don't let me fall into the hands of justice. Take pity on me. I am still young. I will be true to you as long as I live. I will be wholly yours, yours only! Look at me, Alva. Man, look at me! Look at me! [*Knocking on the door outside.*]

ALVA—The police. [*Goes to open it.*]

HUGENBERG—I shall be expelled from school.

PANDORA'S BOX

(DIE BÜCHSE DER PANDORA)

A Tragedy in Three Acts

CHARACTERS

LULU

DR. ALVA SCHÖN, PH.D., *a writer*

SCHIGOLCH

RODRIGO QUAST, *acrobat*

ALFRED HUGENBERG, *escaped from a reform-school*

COUNTESS GESCHWITZ

BIANETTA

LUDMILLA STEINHIERZ

MAGELONE

KADIDIA, *her daughter*

COUNT CASTI-PIANI

PUNTSCHU, *a banker*

HEILMANN, *a journalist*

BOB, *a groom, aged 15*

A DETECTIVE

MR. HUNIDEI

KUNGU POTI, *imperial prince of Uahubee*

DR. HILTI, *tutor*

JACK

In Act II

In Act III

The first act takes place in Germany, the second in France, the third in England.

ACT I

SCENE—*The hall of "Earth-Spirit," Act IV, feebly lighted by an oil lamp on the centre table. Even this is dimmed by a heavy shade. LULU's picture is gone from the easel, which still stands by the foot of the stairs. The fire-screen and the chair by the ottoman are gone too. Down left is a small tea-table, with a coffee-pot and a cup of black coffee on it, and an arm-chair next it.*

In this chair, deep in cushions, with a plaid shawl over her knees, sits COUNTESS GESCHWITZ in a tight black dress. RODRIGO, clad as a servant, sits on the ottoman. At the rear, ALVA SCHÖN is walking up and down before the entrance door.

RODRIGO—He lets people wait for him as if he were a concert conductor!

GESCHWITZ—I beg of you, don't speak!

RODRIGO—Hold my tongue? with a head as full of thoughts as mine is!—I absolutely can't believe she's changed so awfully much to her advantage there!

GESCHWITZ—She is more glorious to look at than I have ever seen her!

RODRIGO—God preserve me from founding my life-happiness upon *y o u r* taste and judgment! If the

disease has hit her as it has you, I'm smashed and thru! You're leaving the contagious ward like a rubber-lady who's had an accident and taken to hunger-striking. You can scarcely blow your nose any more. First you need a quarter-hour to sort your fingers, and then you have to be mighty careful not to break off the tip.

GESCHWITZ—What puts us under the ground gives her health and strength again.

RODRIGO—That's all right and fine enough. But I don't think I'll be travelling off with her this evening.

GESCHWITZ—You will let your bride journey all alone, after all?

RODRIGO—In the first place, the old fellow's going with her to protect her in case anything serious—My escort could only be suspicious. And secondly, I must wait here till my costumes are ready. I'll get across the frontier soon enough all right,—and I hope in the meantime she'll put on a little *embonpoint*, too. Then we'll get married, provided I can present her before a respectable public. I love the practical in a woman: what theories they make up for themselves are all the same to me. Aren't they to you too, Doctor?

ALVA—I haven't heard what you were saying.

RODRIGO—I'd never have got my person mixed up in this plot at all if she hadn't kept tickling my bare pate, before her sentence. If only she doesn't start exercising again too hard the moment she's out of Germany! I'd like best to take her to London

for six months, and let her fill up on plum-cakes. In London one expands just from the sea air. And then, too, in London one doesn't feel with every swallow of beer as if the hand of fate were at one's throat.

ALVA—I've been asking myself for a week now whether a person who'd been sentenced to prison could still be made to go as the chief figure in a modern drama.

GESCHWITZ—If the man would only come, now!

RODRIGO—I've still got to redeem my properties out of the pawn-shop here, too. Six hundred kilos of the best iron. The baggage-rate on 'em is always three times as much as my own ticket, so that the whole junket isn't worth a trousers button. When I went into the pawn-shop with 'em, dripping with sweat, they asked me if the things were genuine!—I'd have really done better to have had the costumes made abroad. In Paris, for instance, they see at the first glance where one's best points are, and bravely lay them bare. But you can't learn that sitting cross-legged; it's got to be studied on classically shaped people. In this country they're as scared of naked skin as they are abroad of dynamite bombs. Two years ago at the Alhambra Theater I was stuck for a fifty-marks fine because people could see I had a few hairs on my chest, not enough to make a respectable toothbrush! But the Fine Arts Minister opined that the little schoolgirls might lose their joy in knitting stockings because of it; and since then I have myself shaved once a month.

ALVA—If I didn't need every bit of my creative power now for the "World-Conqueror," I might like to test the problem and see what could be done with it. That's the curse of our young literature: we're so much too literary. We know only such questions and problems as come up among writers and cultured people. We cannot see beyond the limits of our own professional interests. In order to get back on the trail of a great and powerful art we must live as much as possible among men who've never read a book in their lives, who are moved by the simplest animal instincts in all they do. I've tried already, with all my might, to work according to those principles—in my "Earth-Spirit." The woman who was my model for the chief figure in that, breathes to-day—and has for a year—behind barred windows; and on that account for some incomprehensible reason the play was only brought to performance by the Society for Free Literature. As long as my father was alive, all the stages of Germany stood open to my creations. That has been vastly changed.

RODRIGO—I've had a pair of tights made of the tenderest blue-green. If they don't make a success abroad, I'll sell mouse-traps! The trunks are so delicate I can't sit on the edge of a table in 'em. The only thing that will disturb the good impression is my awful bald head, which I owe to my active participation in this great conspiracy. To lie in the hospital in perfect health for three months would make a fat pig of the most run-down old hobo. Since coming out I've fed on nothing but Karlsbad pills.

Day and night I have orchestra rehearsals in my intestines. I'll be so washed out before I get across the frontier that I won't be able to lift a bottle-cork.

GESCHWITZ—How the attendants in the hospital got out of her way yesterday! That was a refreshing sight. The garden was still as the grave: in the loveliest noon sunlight the convalescents didn't venture out of doors. Away back by the contagious ward she stepped out under the mulberry trees and swayed on her ankles on the gravel. The door-keeper had recognized me, and a young doctor who met me in the corridor shrunk up as tho a revolver shot had struck him. The Sisters vanished into the big rooms or stayed stuck against the walls. When I came back there was not a soul to be seen in the garden or at the gate. No better chance could have been found, if we had had the curséd passports. And now the fellow says he isn't going with her!

RODRIGO—I understand the poor hospital-brothers. One has a bad foot and another has a swollen cheek, and there bobs up in the midst of them the incarnate death-insurance-agentess! In the Hall of the Knights, as the blessed division was called from which I organized my spying, when the news got around there that Sister Theophila had departed this life, not one of the fellows could be kept in bed. They scrambled up to the window-bars, if they had to drag their pains along with them by the hundred-weight. I never heard such swearing in my life!

ALVA—Allow me, Fräulein von Geschwitz, to come back to my proposition once more. Tho she shot my father in this very room, still I can see in the murder, as in the punishment, nothing but a horrible misfortune that has befallen her; nor do I think that my father, if he had come through alive, would have withdrawn his support from her entirely. Whether your plan for freeing her will succeed still seems to me very doubtful, tho I wouldn't like to discourage you; but I can find no words to express the admiration with which your self-sacrifice, your energy, your superhuman scorn of death, inspires me. I don't believe any man ever risked so much for a woman, let alone for a friend. I am not aware, Fräulein von Geschwitz, how rich you are, but the outlay for what you have accomplished must have shattered your fortune. May I venture to offer you a loan of 20,000 marks—which I should have no trouble raising for you in cash?

GESCHWITZ—How we did rejoice when Sister Theophila was really dead! From that day on we were free from supervision. We changed our beds as we liked. I had done my hair like hers, and copied every tone of her voice. When the professor came he called her "gnädiges Fräulein" and said to me, "It's better living here than in prison!" . . . When the Sister suddenly was missing, we looked at each other in suspense: we had both been sick five days: now was the deciding moment. Next morning came the assistant.—"How is Sister Theophila?"—"Dead!"—We communicated behind his back, and

when he had gone we sank in each other's arms: "God be thanked! God be thanked!"—What pains it cost me to keep my darling from betraying how well she already was! "You have nine years of prison before you," I cried to her early and late. And now they probably wouldn't let her stay in the contagious ward three days more!

RODRIGO—I lay in the hospital full three months to spy out the ground, after toilfully peddling together the qualities necessary for such a long stay. Now I act the valet here with you, Dr. Schön, so that no strange servants may come into the house. Where is the bridegroom who's ever done so much for his bride? My fortune has also been shattered.

ALVA—When you succeed in developing her into a respectable artiste you will have put the world in debt to you. With the temperament and the beauty that she has to give out from the inmost depths of her nature she can make the most blasé public hold its breath. And then, too, she will be protected, by acting passion, from a second time becoming a criminal in reality.

RODRIGO—I'll soon drive her kiddishness out of her!

GESCHWITZ—There he comes! [*Steps louden in the gallery. Then the curtains part at the head of the stairs and SCHIGOLCH in a long black coat with a white sun-shade in his right hand comes down. Thruout the play his speech is interrupted with frequent yawns.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Confound the darkness! Outdoors the sun burns your eyes out.

GESCHWITZ—[*Wearily unwrapping herself.*] I'm coming!

RODRIGO—Her ladyship has seen no daylight for three days. We live here like in a snuff-box.

SCHIGOLCH—Since nine o'clock this morning I've been round to all the old-clothes-men. Three brand-new trunks stuffed full of old trousers I've expressed to Buenos Aires via Bremerhaven. My legs are dangling on me like the tongue of a bell. It's going to be a different life for me from now on!

RODRIGO—Where are you going to get off to-morrow morning?

SCHIGOLCH—I hope not straight into Ox-butter Hotel again!

RODRIGO—I can tell you a fine hotel. I lived there with a lady lion-tamer. The people were born in Berlin.

GESCHWITZ—[*Upright in the arm-chair.*] Come and help me!

RODRIGO—[*Hurries to her and supports her.*] And you'll be safer from the police there than on a high tight-rope!

GESCHWITZ—He means to let you go with her alone this afternoon.

SCHIGOLCH—Maybe he's still suffering from his chilblains!

RODRIGO—Do you want me to start my new engagement in bath-robe and slippers?

SCHIGOLCH — Hm—Sister Theophila wouldn't

have gone to heaven so promptly either, if she hadn't felt so affectionate towards our patient.

RODRIGO—When one has to serve thru a honeymoon with her, she'll have a very different value. Anyway, it can't hurt her if she gets a little fresh air beforehand.

ALVA—[*A pocketbook in his hand, to GESCHWITZ, who is leaning on a chair-back by the centre table.*] This holds 10,000 marks.

GESCHWITZ—Thank you, no.

ALVA—Please take it.

GESCHWITZ—[*To SCHIGOLCH.*] Come along, at last!

SCHIGOLCH—Patience, Fräulein. It's only a stone's throw across Hospital Street. I'll be here with her in five minutes.

ALVA—You're bringing her here?

SCHIGOLCH—I'm bringing her here. Or do you fear for your health?

ALVA—You see that I fear nothing.

RODRIGO—According to the latest wire, the doctor is on his way to Constantinople to have his "Earth-Spirit" produced before the Sultan by harem-ladies and eunuchs.

ALVA—[*Opening the centre door under the gallery.*] It's shorter for you thru here. [*Exeunt SCHIGOLCH and COUNTESS GESCHWITZ. ALVA locks the door.*]

RODRIGO—You were going to give more money to the crazy skyrocket!

ALVA—What has that to do with you?

RODRIGO—I get paid like a lamp-lighter, tho I had to demoralize all the Sisters in the hospital. Then came the assistants' and the doctors' turn, and then——

ALVA—Will you seriously inform me that the medical professors let themselves be influenced by you?

RODRIGO—With the money those gentlemen cost me I could become President of the United States!

ALVA—But Fräulein von Geschwitz has reimbursed you for every penny that you spent. So much I know, and you're still getting five hundred marks a month from her besides. It is often pretty hard to believe in your love for the unhappy murderess. When I asked Fräulein von Geschwitz just now to accept my help, it certainly was not done to stir up your insatiable avarice. The admiration which I have learnt to have for Fräulein von Geschwitz in this affair, I am far from feeling towards you. It is not at all clear to me what claims of any kind you can make upon me. That you chanced to be present at the murder of my father has not yet created the slightest bond of relationship between you and me. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that if the heroic undertaking of Countess Geschwitz had not come your way you would be lying somewhere to-day, without a penny, drunken in the gutter.

RODRIGO—And do you know what would have become of you if you hadn't sold for two millions the tuppenny paper your father ran? You'd have hitched up with the stringiest sort of ballet-girl and

been to-day a stable-boy in the Humpelmeier Circus. What work do you do? You've written a drama of horrors in which my bride's calves are the two chief figures and which no high-class theater will produce. You walking pajamas! You fresh rag-bag, you! Two years ago I balanced two saddled cavalry-horses on this chest. How that'll go now, after this [*clapping his bald head*], is a question sure enough. The foreign girls will get a fine idea of German art when they see the sweat come beading thru my tights at every fresh kilo-weight! I shall make the whole auditorium stink with my exhalations!

ALVA—You're weak as a dish-clout!

RODRIGO—Would to God you were right! or did you perhaps intend to insult me? If so, I'll set the tip of my toe to your jaw so that your tongue'll crawl along the carpet over there!

ALVA—Try it! [*Steps and voices outside.*] Who is that. . . ?

RODRIGO—You can thank God that I have no public here before me!

ALVA—Who can that be!

RODRIGO—That is my beloved. It's a full year now since we've seen each other.

ALVA—But how should they be back already! Who can be coming there? I expect no one.

RODRIGO—Oh, the devil, unlock it!

*ALVA—Hide yourself!

RODRIGO—I'll get behind the portières. I've stood there once before, a year ago. [*Disappears, right.*]

ALVA *opens the rear door, whereupon ALFRED HUGENBERG enters, hat in hand.*]

ALVA—With whom have I— . . . You? Aren't you——?

HUGENBERG—Alfred Hugenberg.

ALVA—What can I do for you?

HUGENBERG—I've come from Münsterburg. I ran away this morning.

ALVA—My eyes are bad. I am forced to keep the blinds closed.

HUGENBERG—I need your help. You will not refuse me. I've got a plan ready.—Can anyone hear us?

ALVA—What do you mean? What sort of a plan?

HUGENBERG—Are you alone?

ALVA—Yes. What do you want to impart to me?

HUGENBERG—I've had two plans already that I let drop. What I shall tell you now has been worked out to the last possible chance. If I had money I should not confide it to you; I thought about that a long time before coming. . . . Don't you want to let me explain my scheme to you?

ALVA—Will you kindly tell me just what you are talking about?

HUGENBERG—She cannot possibly be so indifferent to you that I must tell you that. The evidence you gave the coroner helped her more than everything the defending counsel said.

ALVA—I beg to decline the supposition.

HUGENBERG—You would say that; I understand

that, of course. But all the same you were her best witness.

ALVA—You were! You said my father was about to force her to shoot herself.

HUGENBERG—He was, too. But they didn't believe me. I wasn't put on my oath.

ALVA—Where have you come from now?

HUGENBERG—From a reform-school I broke out of this morning.

ALVA—And what do you have in view?

HUGENBERG—I'm trying to get into the confidence of a turnkey.

ALVA—What do you mean to live on?

HUGENBERG—I'm living with a girl who's had a child by my father.

ALVA—Who is your father?

HUGENBERG—He's a police captain. I know the prison without ever having been inside it; and nobody in it will recognize me as I am now. But I don't count on that at all. I know an iron ladder by which one can get from the first court to the roof and thru an opening there into the attic. There's no way up to it from inside. But in all five wings boards and laths and great heaps of shavings are lying under the roofs, and I'll drag them all together in the middle and set fire to them. My pockets are full of matches and all the things used to make fires.

ALVA—But then you'll burn up there!

HUGENBERG—Of course, if I'm not rescued. But to get into the first court I must have the turnkey

in my power, and for that I need money. Not that I mean to bribe him; that wouldn't go. I must lend him money to send his three children to the country, and then at four o'clock in the morning when the prisoners of respected families are discharged, I'll slip in the door. He'll lock-up behind me and ask me what I'm after, and I'll ask him to let me out again in the evening. And before it gets light, I'm up in the attic.

ALVA—How did you escape from the reform-school?

HUGENBERG—Jumped out the window. I need two hundred marks for the rascal to send his family to the country.

RODRIGO—[*Stepping out of the portières, right.*] Will the Herr Baron have coffee in the music-room or on the veranda?

HUGENBERG—How did that man come here? Out of the same door! He jumped out of the same door!

ALVA—I've taken him into my service. He is dependable.

HUGENBERG—[*Grasping his temples.*] Fool that I am! Oh, fool!

RODRIGO—Oh, yah, we've seen each other here before! Cut away now to your vice-mama. Your kid brother might like to uncle his brothers and sisters. Make your sir-papa the grandfather of his children! You're the only thing we've missed. If you once get into my sight in the next two weeks, I'll beat your bean up for porridge.

ALVA—Be quiet, you!

HUGENBERG—I'm a fool!

RODRIGO—What do you want to do with your fire? Don't you know the lady's been dead three weeks?

HUGENBERG—Did they cut off her head?

RODRIGO—No, she's got that still. She was mashed by the cholera.

HUGENBERG—That is not true!

RODRIGO—What do you know about it! There, read it: here! [*Taking out a paper and pointing to the place.*] "The murderess of Dr. Schön . . ." [*Gives HUGENBERG the paper. He reads:*]

HUGENBERG—"The murderess of Dr. Schön has in some incomprehensible way fallen ill of the cholera in prison." It doesn't say that she's dead.

RODRIGO—Well, what else do you suppose she is? She's been lying in the churchyard three weeks. Back in the left-hand corner behind the rubbish-heap where the little crosses are with no names on them, there she lies under the first one. You'll know the spot because the grass hasn't grown on it. Hang a tin wreath there, and then get back to your nursery-school or I'll denounce you to the police. I know the female that beguiles her leisure hours with you!

HUGENBERG—[*To ALVA.*] Is it true that she's dead?

*ALVA—Thank God, yes!—Please, do not keep me here any longer. My doctor has forbidden me to receive visitors.

HUGENBERG—My future life means so little now! I would gladly have given the last scrap of what life is worth to me for her happiness. Heigh-ho! One way or another I'll sure go to the devil now!

RODRIGO—If you dare in any way to approach me or the doctor here or my honorable friend Schigolch too near, I'll inform on you for intended arson. You need three good years of prison to learn where not to stick your fingers in! Now get out!

HUGENBERG—Fool!

RODRIGO—Get out! [*Throws him out the door. Coming down.*] I wonder you didn't put your purse at that rogue's disposal, too!

ALVA—I won't stand your damned jabbering! The boy's little finger is worth more than all you!

RODRIGO—I've had enough of this Geschwitz's company! If my bride is to become a corporation with limited liability, somebody else can go in ahead of me. I propose to make a magnificent trapeze-artiste out of her, and willingly risk my life to do it. But then I'll be master of the house, and will myself indicate what cavaliers she is to receive!

ALVA—The boy has what our age lacks: a hero-nature; therefore, of course, he is going to ruin. Do you remember how before sentence was passed he jumped out of the witness-box and yelled at the justice: "How do you know what would have become of you if you'd had to run around the cafés barefoot every night when you were ten years old?" "

RODRIGO—If I could only have given him one in the jaw for that right away! Thank God, there

are jails where scum like that gets some respect for the law pounded into them.

ALVA—One like him might have been my model for my "World-conqueror." For twenty years literature has presented nothing but demi-men: men who can beget no children and women who can bear none. That's called "The Modern Problem."

RODRIGO—I've ordered a hippopotamus-whip two inches thick. If that has no success with her, you can fill my cranium with potato-soup. Be it love or be it whipping, female flesh never inquires. Only give it some amusement, and it stays firm and fresh. She is now in her twentieth year, has been married three times and has satisfied a gigantic horde of lovers, and her heart's desires are at last pretty plain. But the man's got to have the seven deadly sins on his forehead, or she honors him not. If he looks as if a dog-catcher had spat him out on the street, then, with such women-folks, he needn't be afraid of a prince! I'll rent a garage fifty feet high and break her in there; and when she's learnt the first diving-leap without breaking her neck I'll pull on a black coat and not stir a finger the rest of my life. With her practical equipment it costs a woman not half the trouble to support her husband as the other way round, if only the man looks after the mental work for her, and doesn't let the sense of the family go to wreck.

ALVA—I have learnt how to master humanity and drive it in harness before me like a well-broken four-in-hand,—but that boy sticks in my head. Really,

I can still take private lessons in the scorn of the world from that schoolboy!

RODRIGO—She'll just comfortably let her hide be papered with thousand-mark bills! I'll extract salaries out of the directors with a centrifugal pump. I know their kind. When they don't need a man, let him shine their shoes for them; but when they must have an artiste they'll cut her down from the very gallows with their own hands and with the most binding compliments.

ALVA—In my circumstances there's nothing left in the world that I should fear—but death. Yet in feelings and sensations I am the poorest beggar.—However, I can no longer scrape up the moral courage to exchange my established position for the excitements of the wild, adventurous life!

RODRIGO—She had sicked Papa Schigolch and me out on a hunt together to rout her out some strong antidote for insomnia. We each got a twenty-mark piece for expenses. There in the Nightlight Café we see the youngster sitting like a criminal on the prisoner's bench. Schigolch sniffed at him from all sides, and remarked, "He is still virgin." [*Up in the gallery, dragging steps are heard.*] There she is! The future magnificent trapeze-artiste of the present age! [*The curtains part at the stair-head, and LULU appears, supported by SCHIGOLCH and in COUNTESS GESCHWITZ's black dress, slowly and wearily descending.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Hui, old moldy! We've still to get over the frontier to-day.

RODRIGO—[*Glaring stupidly at LULU.*] Thunder of heaven! Death!

LULU—[*Speaks, to the end of the act, in the gayest tones.*] Slowly! You're pinching my arm!

RODRIGO—How did you ever get the shamelessness to break out of prison with such a wolf's face?

SCHIGOLCH—Stop your snout!

RODRIGO—I'll run for the police! I'll give information! This scarecrow let herself be seen in tights? The padding alone would cost two months' salary!—You're the most perfidious swindler that ever had lodging in Ox-butter Hotel!

ALVA—Kindly refrain from insulting the lady!

RODRIGO—Insulting, you call that? For this gnawed bone's sake I've worn myself away! I can't earn my own living! I'll be a clown if I can still stand firm under a broomstick! But let the lightning strike me on the spot if I don't worm ten thousand marks a year for life out of your tricks and frauds! I can tell you that! A pleasant trip! I'm going for the police! [*Exit.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Run, run.

LULU—He'll take good care of himself!

SCHIGOLCH—We're rid of him!—And now some black coffee for the lady!

ALVA—[*At the table left.*] Here is coffee, ready to pour.

SCHIGOLCH—I must look after the sleeping-car tickets.

LULU—[*Brightly.*] Oh, freedom! Thank God for freedom!

SCHIGOLCH—I'll be back for you in half an hour. We'll celebrate our departure in the station-restaurant. I'll order a supper that'll keep us going till to-morrow.—Good morning, Doctor.

ALVA—Good evening.

SCHIGOLCH—Pleasant rest!—Thanks, I know every door-handle here. So long! Have a good time! [*Exit, centre.*]

LULU—I haven't seen a room for a year and a half. Curtains, chairs, pictures . . .

ALVA—Won't you drink it?

LULU—I've swallowed enough black coffee these five days. Have you any brandy?

ALVA—I've got some elixir de Spaa.

LULU—That reminds one of old times. [*Looks round the hall while ALVA fills two glasses.*]
Where's my picture gone?

ALVA—I've got it in my room, so no one shall see it here.

LULU—Bring it here, do!

ALVA—Haven't you got over your vanity even in prison?

LULU—How anxious at heart you get when you don't see yourself for months! One day I got a brand-new dust-pan. When I swept up at seven in the morning I held the back of it up before my face. Tin doesn't flatter, but I took pleasure in it all the same.—Get the picture out of your room. Shall I come, too?

ALVA—N Heaven's sake! You must spare yourself!

LULU—I've been sparing myself long enough now! [ALVA goes out, right, to get the picture.] He has heart-trouble; but to have to plague one's self with imagination fourteen months! . . . He kisses with the fear of death on him, and his two knees shake like a frozen vagabond's. In God's name! . . . In this room—if only I had not shot his father in the back!

ALVA—[Returns with the picture of LULU in the Pierrot-dress.] It's covered with dust. I had leant it against the fireplace, face to the wall.

LULU—You didn't look at it all the time I was away?

ALVA—I had so much business to attend to, with the sale of our paper and everything. Countess Geschwitz would have liked to have hung it up in her house, but she had to be prepared for search-war-rants. [He puts the picture on the easel.]

LULU—[Merrily.] Now the poor monster is getting personally acquainted with the life of joy in Hotel Ox-butter!

ALVA—Even now I don't understand how events hang together.

LULU—Oh, Geschwitz arranged it all very cleverly. I do admire her inventiveness. But the cholera must have raged fearfully in Hamburg this summer; and on that she based her plan for freeing me. She took a course in hospital nursing here, and when she had the necessary documents she journeyed to Hamburg with them and nursed the cholera patients. At the first opportunity that offered she put on the under-clothes that a sick woman had just died in and which

really ought to have been burnt. The same morning she traveled back here and came to see me in prison. In my cell, while the wardress was outside, we two, as quick as we could, exchanged underclothes.

ALVA—So that was the reason why the Countess and you fell sick of the cholera the same day!

LULU—Exactly, that was it! Geschwitz of course was instantly brought from her house to the contagious ward in the hospital. But with me, too, they couldn't think of any other place to take me. So there we lay in one room in the contagious ward behind the hospital, and from the first day Geschwitz put forth all her art to make our two faces as like each other as possible. Day before yesterday she was let out as cured. Just now she came back and said she'd forgotten her watch. I put on her clothes, she slipped into my prison frock, and then I came away. [*With pleasure.*] Now she's lying over there as the murderess of Dr. Schön.

ALVA—So far as outward appearance goes you can hold your own with the picture as well as ever.

LULU—I'm a little peaked in the face, but otherwise I've lost nothing. Only one gets incredibly nervous in prison.

ALVA—You looked horribly sick when you came in.

LULU—I had to, to get our necks out of the noose.—And you? What have you done in this year and a half?

ALVA—I've had a succès d'estime in literary circles with a play I wrote about you.

LULU—Who's your sweetheart now?

ALVA—An actress I've rented a house for in Karl Street.

LULU—Does she love you?

ALVA—How should I know that? I haven't seen the woman for six weeks.

LULU—Can you stand that?

ALVA—You will never grasp it—but with me there's the closest alternation between my sensuality and my creative powers. So, as regards you, for example, I have to make the choice of either setting you forth artistically or of loving you.

LULU—[*In a fairy-story tone.*] I used to dream, once, every other night, that I'd fallen into the hands of a sadist. . . . Come, give me a kiss!

ALVA—It's shining in your eyes like the water in a deep well one has just thrown a stone into.

LULU—Come!

ALVA—[*Kisses her.*] Your lips have got pretty thin, sure enough.

LULU—Come! [*Pushes him into a chair and seats herself on his knee.*] Do you shudder at me?—In Hotel Ox-butter we all got a lukewarm bath every four weeks. The wardresses took that opportunity to search our pockets as soon as we were in the water. [*She kisses him passionately.*]

ALVA—Oh, oh!

LULU—You're afraid that when I'm away you couldn't write any more poems about me?

ALVA—On the contrary, I shall write a dithyramb upon your glory.

LULU—I'm only sore about the hideous shoes I'm wearing.

ALVA—They do not encroach upon your charms. Let us be thankful for the favor of this moment.

LULU—I don't feel at all like that to-day.—Do you remember the costume ball where I was dressed like a knight's squire? How those wine-full women ran after me that time? Geschwitz crawled round, round my feet, and begged me to step on her face with my cloth shoes.

ALVA—Come, dear heart!

LULU—[*In the tone with which one quiets a restless child.*] Quietly! I shot your father.

ALVA—I do not love you less for that. One kiss!

LULU—Bend your head back. [*She kisses him with deliberation.*]

ALVA—You hold back the fire of my soul with the most dexterous art. And your breast breathes so virginly too. Yet if it weren't for your two great, dark, child's eyes, I must needs have thought you the cunningest whore that ever hurled a man to destruction.

LULU—[*In high spirits.*] Would God I were! Come over the border with us to-day! Then we can see each other as often as we will, and we'll get more pleasure from each other than now.

ALVA—Through this dress I feel your body like a symphony. These slender ankles, this cantabile. This rapturous crescendo. And these knees, this capriccio. And the powerful andante of lust!—How peacefully these two slim rivals press against each

other in the consciousness that neither equals the other in beauty—till their capricious mistress wakes up and the rival lovers separate like the two hostile poles. I shall sing your praises so that your senses shall whirl!

LULU—[*Merrily.*] Meanwhile I'll bury my hands in your hair. [*She does so.*] But here we'll be disturbed.

ALVA—You have robbed me of my reason!

LULU—Aren't you coming with me to-day?

ALVA—But the old fellow's going with you!

LULU—He won't turn up again.—Is not that the divan on which your father bled to death?

ALVA—Be still. Be still. . . .

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE—*A spacious salon in white stucco. In the rear wall, between two high mirrors, a wide folding doorway showing in the rear room a big card-table surrounded by Turkish upholstered chairs. In the left wall two doors, the upper one to the entrance-hall, the lower to the dining-room. Between them a rococo console with a white marble top, and above it LULU's Pierrot-picture in a narrow gold frame let into the wall. Two other doors, right; near the lower one a small table. Wide and brightly covered chairs stand about, with thin legs and fragile arms; and in the middle is a sofa of the same style (Louis XV).*

A large company is moving about the salon in lively conversation. The men—ALVA, RODRIGO, MARQUIS CASTI-PIANI, BANKER PUNT-SCHU, and JOURNALIST HEILMANN—are in evening dress. LULU wears a white Directoire dress with huge sleeves and white lace falling freely from belt to feet. Her arms are in white kid gloves, her hair done high with a little tuft of white feathers. GESCHWITZ is in a bright blue hussar-waist trimmed with white fur and laced with silver braid, a tall tight collar with a white bow, and stiff cuffs with huge ivory links.

MAGELONE is in bright rainbow-colored shot silk with very wide sleeves, long narrow waist, and three ruffles of spiral rose-colored ribbons and violet bouquets. Her hair is parted in the middle and drawn low over her temples. On her forehead is a mother-of-pearl ornament, held by a fine chain under her hair. KADIDIA, her daughter, twelve years old, has bright-green satin gaiters which yet leave visible the tops of her white silk socks, and a white-lace-covered dress with bright-green narrow sleeves, pearl-gray gloves, and free black hair under a big bright-green hat with white feathers. BIANETTA is in a loose-sleeved dress of dark-green velvet, the bodice sewn with pearls, and the skirt full, without a waist, embroidered at the hem with great false topazes set in silver. LUDMILLA STEINHERZ is in a glaring summer frock striped red and blue.

RODRIGO stands, centre, a full glass in his hand.

RODRIGO—Ladies and gentlemen—I beg your pardon—please be quiet—I drink—permit me to drink—for this is the birthday party of our amiable hostess—[taking LULU's arm] of Countess Adelaide d'Oubra—damned and done for!—I drink therefore — — and so forth, go to it, ladies! [All surround LULU and clink with her. ALVA presses RODRIGO's hand.]

ALVA—I congratulate you.

RODRIGO—I'm sweating like a roast pig.

ALVA—[*To LULU.*] Let's see if everything's in order in the card-room. [ALVA and LULU *exeunt*, *rear*. BIANETTA *speaks to* RODRIGO.]

BIANETTA—They were telling me just now you were the strongest man in the world.

RODRIGO—That I am. May I put my strength at your disposal?

MAGELONE—I love sharp-shooters better. Three months ago a sharp-shooter appeared in the Casino, and every time he went "bang!" I felt like this. [*She wriggles her hips.*]

CASTI-PIANI—[*Who speaks thruout the act in a bored and weary tone, to* MAGELONE.] Say, dearie, how does it happen we see your nice little princess here for the first time to-night? [*Meaning* KADIDIA.]

MAGELONE—Do you really find her so delightful?—She is still in the convent. She must be back in school again on Monday.

KADIDIA—What did you say, Mama?

MAGELONE—I was just telling the gentlemen that you got the highest mark in geometry last week.

HEILMANN—Some pretty hair she's got!

CASTI-PIANI—Just look at her feet: the way she walks.

PUNTSCHU—By God, she's a thoroughbred!

MAGELONE—[*Smiling.*] But, my dear sirs, take pity on her! She's nothing but a child still!

PUNTSCHU—That'd trouble me damned little! [*To* HEILMANN.] I'd give ten years of my life if

I could initiate the young lady into the ceremonies of our secret society!

MAGELONE—But you won't get me to consent to that for a million. I won't have the child's youth ruined, the way mine was!

CASTI-PIANI—Confessions of a lovely soul! [*To MAGELONE.*] Would you not grant your permission even for a set of real diamonds?

MAGELONE—Don't brag! You'll give as few real diamonds to me as to my child. You know that best yourself. [*KADIDIA goes into the rear room.*]

GESCHWITZ—But is nobody at all going to play, this evening?

LUDMILLA—Why, of course, Comtesse. I'm counting on it very much, for one!

BIANETTA—Then let's take our places right away. The gentlemen will soon come then.

GESCHWITZ—May I ask you to excuse me just a second more? I must say a word to my friend.

CASTI-PIANI—[*Offering his arm to BIANETTA.*] May I have the honor to be your partner? You always hold such a lucky hand!

LUDMILLA—Now just give me your other arm and then lead us into the gambling-hell. [*The three go off so, rear.*]

MAGELONE—Say, Mr. Puntschu, have you still got a few Jungfrau-shares for me, maybe?

PUNTSCHU—Jungfrau-shares? [*To HEILMANN.*] The lady means the stock of the funicular railway on the Jungfrau. The Jungfrau, you know,—the Virgin—is a mountain and they're going to build a wire

railway up it. [*To MAGELONE.*] You understand,—just so there may be no confusion;—and how easy that would be in this select circle!—Yes, I still have some four thousand Jungfrau-shares, but I should like to keep those for myself. There won't be such another chance soon of making a little fortune out of hand.

HEILMANN—I've only one lone share of this Jungfrau-stock so far. I should like to have more, too.

PUNTSCHU—I'll try, Mr. Heilmann, to look after some for you. But I tell you beforehand you'll have to pay drug-store prices for them!

MAGELONE—My fortune-teller advised me to look about me in time. All my savings are in Jungfrau-shares now. If it doesn't turn out well, Mr. Puntschu, I'll scratch your eyes out!

PUNTSCHU—I am perfectly sure of my affairs, my dearie!

ALVA—[*Who has come back from the card-room, to MAGELONE.*] I can guarantee your fears are absolutely unfounded. I paid very dear for my Jungfrau-stock and haven't regretted it a minute. They're going up steadily from day to day. There never was such a thing before.

MAGELONE—All the better, if you're right. [*Taking PUNTSCHU's arm.*] Come, my friend, let's try our luck now at baccarat. [*All go out, rear, except GESCHWITZ and RODRIGO, who scribbles something on a piece of paper and folds it up, then notices GESCHWITZ.*]

RODRIGO—Hm, madam Countess—— [*GESCHWITZ*

starts and shrinks.] Do I look as dangerous as that? [*To himself.*] I must make a bon mot. [*Aloud.*] May I perhaps make so bold——

GESCHWITZ—You can go to the devil!

CASTI-PIANI—[*As he leads LULU in.*] You will allow me a word or two.

LULU—[*Not noticing RODRIGO, who presses his note into her hand.*] Oh, as many as you like.

RODRIGO—[*As he bows and goes out, rear.*] I beg you will excuse me. . . .

CASTI-PIANI—[*To GESCHWITZ.*] Leave us alone!

LULU—[*To CASTI-PIANI.*] Have I vexed you again somehow?

CASTI-PIANI—[*Since GESCHWITZ does not stir.*] Are you deaf? [GESCHWITZ, *sighing deeply, goes out, rear.*]

LULU—Just say straight out how much you want.

CASTI-PIANI—With money you can no longer serve me.

LULU—What makes you think that we have no more money?

CASTI-PIANI—You handed out the last bit of it to me yesterday.

LULU—If you're sure of that then I suppose it's so.

CASTI-PIANI—You're down to bedrock, you and your writer.

LULU—Then why all these words?—If you want to have me for yourself you need not first threaten me with execution.

CASTI-PIANI—I know that. But I've told you

more than once that you are not the sort I fall for. I haven't plundered you because you loved me, but loved you in order to fleece you. Bianetta is more to my taste from top to bottom than you. You set out the choicest lot of sweetmeats, and when one has frittered his time away at them he finds he's hungrier than before. You've loved too long, even for our relations here. With a healthy young man, you only ruin his nervous system. But you'll fit all the more perfectly in the position I have sought out for you.

LULU—You're crazy! Have I commissioned you to find a position for me?

CASTI-PIANI—I told you, though, that I was an employment-agent.

LULU—You told me you were a police spy.

CASTI-PIANI—One can't live on that alone. I was an employment-agent originally, till I blundered over a minister's daughter I'd got a position for in Val-paraiso. The little darling in her childhood's dreams had imagined the life to be even more intoxicating than it is, and complained about it to Mama. On that, they nabbed me; but by reliable demeanor I soon enough won the confidence of the criminal police and they sent me here on a hundred and fifty marks a month, because they were tripling our contingent here on account of these everlasting bomb-explosions. But who can get along in Paris on a hundred and fifty marks a month? My colleagues get women to support them; but, of course, I found it more convenient to take up my former

calling again; and of the numberless adventuresses of the best families of the entire world, whom chance brings together here, I have already forwarded many a young creature hungry for life to the place of her natural vocation.

LULU—[*Decisively.*] I'm no good for that business.

CASTI-PIANI—Your views on that question make no difference whatever to me. The department of justice will pay anyone who delivers the murderess of Dr. Schön into the hands of the police a thousand marks. I only need to whistle for the constable who's standing down at the corner to have earned a thousand marks. Against that, the House of Oikonomopulos in Cairo bids sixty pounds for you—twelve hundred marks—two hundred more than the Attorney General. And, besides, I am still so far a friend of mankind that I prefer to help my loves to happiness, not hurl them into misery.

LULU—[*As before.*] The life in such a house can never in the world make a woman of my sort happy. When I was fifteen, I might have liked it. I was desperate then—thought I should never be happy. I bought a revolver, and ran one night barefoot through the deep snow over the bridge to the park to shoot myself there. But then by good luck I lay three months in the hospital without once getting sight of a man, and in that time my eyes were opened and I got to know myself. Night after night in my dreams I saw the man for whom I was created and who was created for me, so that when I was let out

on the men again I was a silly goose no longer. Since then I can see on a man, in a pitch-dark night and a hundred feet away, whether we're meant for each other; and if I sin against that insight I feel the next day dirtied, body and soul, and need weeks to get over the loathing I have for myself. And now you imagine I'll give myself to every and any Tom and Harry!

CASTI-PIANI—Toms and Harries don't patronize Oikonomopulos of Cairo. His custom consists of Scottish lords, Russian dignitaries, Indian governors, and our jolly Rhineland captains of industry. I must only guarantee that you speak French. With your gift for languages you'll quickly enough learn as much English, besides, as you'll need to get on with. And you'll reside in a royally furnished apartment with an outlook on the minarets of the El Azhar Mosque, and walk around all day on Persian carpets as thick as your fist, and dress every evening in a fabulous Paris gown, and drink as much champagne as your customers can pay for, and, finally, you'll even remain, up to a certain point, your own mistress. If the man doesn't please you, you needn't play up to him at all. Just let him give in his card, and then—— [*Shrugs, and snaps his fingers.*] If the ladies didn't get used to that the whole business would be simply impossible, because every one of them after the first few weeks would go headlong to the devil.

LULU—[*Her voice shaking.*] I do believe that since yesterday you've got a screw loose somewhere.

Am I to understand that the Egyptian will pay fifteen hundred francs for a person whom he's never seen?

CASTI-PIANI—I took the liberty of sending him your pictures.

LULU—Those pictures that I gave you, you've sent to him?

CASTI-PIANI—You see he can value them better than I. The picture in which you stand before the mirror as Eve he'll probably hang up at the house-door, after you've got there. . . . And then there's one thing more for you to notice: with Oikonomopulos in Cairo you'll be safer from your bloodhounds than if you crept into a Canadian wilderness. It isn't so easy to transport an Egyptian courtesan to a German prison,—first, on account of the mere expense, and second, from fear of treading too close upon eternal Justice.

LULU—[*Proudly, in a clear voice.*] What have I to do with your eternal Justice! You can see as plain as your five fingers I shan't let myself be locked up in any such amusement-place!

CASTI-PIANI—Then will you permit me to whistle up the policeman?

LULU—[*In wonder.*] Why don't you simply ask me for twelve hundred marks, if you want the money?

CASTI-PIANI—I want for no money! And I also don't ask for it because you're dead broke.

LULU—We still have thirty thousand marks.

CASTI-PIANI—In Jungfrau-stock! I never have anything to do with stock. The Attorney General

pays in the imperial currency, and Oikonomopulos pays in English gold. You can be on board early to-morrow. The passage doesn't last much more than five days. In two weeks at most you're in safety. Here you are nearer to prison than anywhere. It's a wonder which I, as one of the secret police, cannot understand, that you two have been able to live for a full year unmolested. But just as *I* came on the track of your antecedents, so any day, with your mighty consumption of men, one of my colleagues may make the happy discovery. Then I may just wipe my mouth, and you spend the most enjoyable years of your life in prison. If you will kindly decide quickly. The train goes at 12:30. If we haven't struck a bargain before eleven, I whistle up the policeman. If we have, I pack you, just as you stand, into a carriage, drive you to the station, and to-morrow night escort you on board ship.

LULU—But is it possible you can be serious in all this?

CASTI-PIANI—Don't you understand that your bodily rescue is the only thing left me to do?

LULU—I'll go with you to America or to China, but I can't let myself be sold of my own accord! That is worse than prison!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Drawing a letter from his pocket.*] Just read this effusion! I'll read it to you. Here's the postmark "Cairo," so you won't believe I work with forged documents. The girl is a Berliner, was married two years and to a man whom you would

have envied her, a former comrade of mine. He travels now for some Hamburg colonial company. . . .

LULU—[*Merrily.*] Then perhaps he visits his wife occasionally?

CASTI-PIANI—That is not incredible. But hear this impulsive expression of her feelings. My white-slave traffic seems to me absolutely no more honorable than the first judge you happened on would think it, but a cry of joy like this lets me feel a certain moral satisfaction for a moment. I am proud to earn my money by scattering happiness with full hands. [*Reads.*] “Dear Mr. Meyer”—that’s my name as a white-slave trader—“when you go to Berlin, please go right away to the conservatory on the Potsdamer Strasse and ask for Gusti von Rosenkron—the most beautiful woman that I’ve ever seen anywhere—delightful hands and feet, naturally small waist, straight back, full body, big eyes and short nose—just the sort you like best. I have written to her already. She has no prospects with her singing. Her mother hasn’t a penny. Sorry she’s already twenty-two, but she’s pining for love. Can’t marry, because absolutely without means. I have spoken with Madame. They’d like to take another German, if she’s well educated and musical. Italians and Frenchwomen can’t compete with us;—not cultured enough. If you should see Fritz”—Fritz is the husband; he’s getting a divorce, of course,—“tell him it was all a bore. He didn’t know any better, neither did I.” Now come the exact details——

LULU—[*Goaded.*] I cannot sell the only thing that ever was my own!

CASTI-PIANI—Let me read some more.

LULU—[*As before.*] This very evening, I'll hand over to you our entire wealth.

CASTI-PIANI—Believe me, for God's sake, I've got your last red cent! If we haven't left this house before eleven, you and your lot will be transported to-morrow in a police-car to Germany.

LULU—You can't give me up!

CASTI-PIANI—Do you think that would be the worst thing I "can" have done in my life? . . . I must, in case we go to-night, have just a brief word with Bianetta. [*He goes into the card-room, leaving the door open behind him. LULU stares before her, mechanically crumpling up the note that RODRIGO stuck into her hand, which she has held in her fingers thruout the dialogue. ALVA, behind the card-table, gets up, a bill in his hand, and comes into the salon.*]

ALVA—[*To LULU.*] Brilliantly! It's going brilliantly! Geschwitz is wagering her last shirt. Puntschu has promised me ten more Jungfrau-shares. Steinerherz is making her little gains and profits. [*Exit, lower right.*]

LULU—I in a bordel? [*She reads the paper she holds, and laughs madly.*]

ALVA—[*Coming back with a cash-box in his hand.*] Aren't you going to play, too?

LULU—Oh, yes, surely—why not?

ALVA—By the way, it's in the "Berliner Tage-

blatt" to-day that Alfred Hugenberg has hurled himself over the stairs in prison.

LULU—Is he too in prison?

ALVA—Only in a sort of house of detention.
[Exit, rear. LULU is about to follow, but COUNTESS GESCHWITZ meets her in the doorway.]

GESCHWITZ—You are going because I come?

LULU—[Resolutely.] No, God knows. But when you come then I go.

GESCHWITZ—You have defrauded me of all the good things of this world that I still possessed. You might at the very least preserve the outward forms of politeness in your intercourse with me.

LULU—[As before.] I am as polite to you as to any other woman. I only beg you to be equally so to me.

GESCHWITZ—Have you forgotten the passionate endearments you used, while we lay together in the hospital, to seduce me into letting myself be locked into prison for you?

LULU—Well, why else did you bring me down with the cholera beforehand? I swore very different things to myself, even while it was going on, from what I had to promise you! I am shaken with horror at the thought that that should ever become reality!

GESCHWITZ—Then you cheated me consciously, deliberately!

LULU—[Gaily.] And what have you been cheated of, eh? Your physical advantages have found so enthusiastic an admirer here, that I ask myself if I won't have to give piano lessons once more, to keep

alive! No seventeen-year-old child could make a man madder with love than you, a pervert, are making him, poor fellow, by your shrewishness.

GESCHWITZ—Of whom are you speaking? I don't understand a word.

LULU—[*As before.*] I'm speaking of your acrobat, of Rodrigo Quast. He's an athlete: he balances two saddled cavalry horses on his chest. Can a woman desire anything more glorious? He told me just now that he'd jump into the water to-night if you did not take pity on him.

GESCHWITZ—I do not envy you your cleverness at torturing the helpless victims sacrificed to you by their inscrutable destiny. I cannot envy you at all. My own misery has not yet wrung from me the pity that I feel for you. I feel free as a god when I think to what creatures **y o u** are enslaved.

LULU—Whom do you mean?

GESCHWITZ—Casti-Piani, upon whose forehead the most degenerate baseness is written in letters of fire!

LULU—Be silent! I'll kick you, if you speak ill of him. He loves me so uprightly that your most venturesome self-sacrifices are beggary in comparison! He gives me such proofs of self-denial as reveal **y o u** for the first time in all your loathsomeness! You didn't get finished in your mother's womb, neither as woman nor as man. You have no human nature like the rest of us. The stuff didn't go far enough for a man, and for a woman you got too much brain in your noddle. That's the reason you're crazy! Turn to Miss Bianetta! She can be had for every-

thing for pay! Press a gold-piece into her hand and she'll be yours. [*All the company save KADIDIA throng in out of the card-room.*] For the Lord's sake, what has happened?

PUNTSCHU—Nothing whatever! We're thirsty, that's all.

MAGELONE—Everybody has won. We can't believe it.

BIANETTA—Seems to me I have won quite a fortune!

LUDMILLA—Don't boast of it, my child. That isn't lucky.

MAGELONE—But the bank has won, too! How is that possible?

ALVA—It is colossal, where all the money comes from!

CASTI-PIANI—Let us not ask! Enough that we need not spare the champagne.

HEILMANN—I can pay for a supper in a respectable restaurant afterwards, anyway!

ALVA—To the buffet, ladies! Come to the buffet! [*All exeunt, lower left.*]

RODRIGO—[*Holding LULU back.*] Un momong, my heart. Have you read my billet-doux?

LULU—Threaten me with discovery as much as you like! I have no more twenty thousands to dispose of.

RODRIGO—Don't lie to me, you punk! You've still got forty thousand in Jungfrau-stock. Your so-called spouse has just been bragging of it himself!

LULU—Then turn to him with your blackmail-

ing! It's all one to me what he does with his money.

RODRIGO—Thank you! With that blockhead I'd need twice twenty-four hours to make him grasp what I was talking about. And then come his explanations, that make one deathly sick; and meanwhile my bride-to-be writes me to call it off, and I can just hang a hurdy-gurdy over my shoulder.

LULU—What, have you got engaged here?

RODRIGO—Maybe I ought to have asked your permission first? What were my thanks here for having freed you from prison at the cost of my health? You abandoned me! I might have had to turn porter if this girl hadn't taken me up! At my entrance, the very first evening, somebody threw a velvet-covered arm-chair at my head! This country is too decadent to value genuine shows of strength any more. If I'd been a boxing kangaroo they'd have interviewed me and put my picture in all the papers. Thank Heaven, I'd already made the acquaintance of my Celestine. She's got the savings of twenty years deposited with the government; and she loves me just for myself. She doesn't aim at vile vulgarities and nothing else like you. She's had three children by an American bishop—all of the greatest promise. Early day after to-morrow we're going to get married at the registrar's.

LULU—You have my blessing.

RODRIGO—Your blessing can be stolen from me. I've told my bride I had twenty thousand in stock at the bank.

LULU—[*Amused.*] And after that he boasts the woman loves him for himself!

RODRIGO—She honors in me the man of feeling, not the man of force as you and all the others have done. That's well over now. First they'd tear the clothes from one's body and then waltz around with the chambermaid. I'll be a skeleton before I'll let myself in again for such diversions!

LULU—Then why the devil do you especially pursue poor Geschwitz with your proposals?

RODRIGO—Because the thing is of noble blood. I'm a man of the world, and can do distinguished conversation better than any of you. But now [*with a gesture*] my talk is hanging out of my mouth! Will you get me the money before to-morrow evening, or won't you?

LULU—I have no money.

RODRIGO—I'll have hen-droppings in my head before I'll let myself be put off with that! He'll give you his last cent if you'll only do your damned debt and duty by him once! You lured the poor lad here, and now he can see where to scare up a suitable engagement for his accomplishments.

LULU—What is it to you if he wastes his money with women or at cards?

RODRIGO—Do you absolutely want, then, to throw the last penny that his father earned by his paper into the jaws of this rapacious pack? You'll make four people happy if you'll strain a point and sacrifice yourself for a philanthropic purpose! Has it got to be only Casti-Piani forever?

LULU—[*Lightly.*] Shall I ask him perhaps to light you down the stairs?

RODRIGO—As you wish, Countess! If I don't get the twenty thousand marks by to-morrow evening, I make a statement to the police and your salon comes to an end. Auf Wiedersehen! [HEILMANN enters, breathless, upper right.]

LULU—You're looking for Miss Magelone? She's not here.

HEILMANN—No, I'm looking for something else—

RODRIGO—[*Taking him to the entry-door, opposite him.*] Second door on the left.

LULU—[*To RODRIGO.*] Did you learn that from your bride?

HEILMANN—[*Bumping into PUNTSCHU in the doorway.*] Excuse me, my angel!

PUNTSCHU—Ah, it's you. Miss Magelone's waiting for you in the lift.

HEILMANN—You go up with her, please. I'll be right back. [*He hurries out, left. LULU goes out at lower left. RODRIGO follows her.*]

PUNTSCHU—Some heat, that! If I don't cut off your ears, you'll cut 'em off me! If I can't hire out my Jehoshaphat,¹ I've just got to help myself with my brains! Won't they get wrinkled, my brains! Won't they get indisposed! Won't they need to bathe in Eau de Cologne! [BOB, a groom in a red jacket, tight leather breeches, and twinkling riding-boots, fifteen years old, brings in a telegram.]

BOB—Mr. Puntschu, the banker!

¹ For the meaning of this see page 51.

PUNTSCHU—[*Breaks open the telegram and murmurs:*] “Jungfrau Funicular Stock fallen to——”
Ay, ay, so goes the world! [To BOB.] Wait!
[*Gives him a tip.*] Tell me—what’s your name?

BOB—Well, my name is Freddy, but they call me Bob, because that’s the fashion now.

PUNTSCHU—How old are you?

BOB—Fifteen.

KADIDIA—[*Enters hesitatingly from lower left.*] I beg your pardon, can you tell me if Mama is here?

PUNTSCHU—No, my dear. [*Aside.*] Devil, she’s got breeding!

KADIDIA—I’m hunting all over for her; I can’t find her anywhere.

PUNTSCHU—Your mama will turn up again soon, as true as my name’s Puntschu! [*Looking at BOB.*] And that pair of breeches! God of Justice! It gets uncanny! [*He goes out, upper right.*]

KADIDIA—Haven’t y o u seen my mama, perhaps?

BOB—No, but you only need to come with me.

KADIDIA—Where is she then?

BOB—She’s gone up in the lift. Come along.

KADIDIA—No, no, I can’t go up with you.

BOB—We can hide up there in the corridor.

KADIDIA—No, no, I can’t come, or I’ll be scolded.
[MAGELONE, *terribly excited, rushes in, upper left, and possesses herself of KADIDIA.*]

MAGELONE—Ha, there you are at last, you common creature!

KADIDIA—[*Crying.*] O Mama, Mama, I was hunting for you!

MAGELONE—Hunting for me? Did I tell you to hunt for me? What have you had to do with this fellow? [HEILMANN, ALVA, LUDMILLA, PUNTSCHU, GESCHWITZ, and LULU enter, lower left. BOB has slipped away.] Now don't bawl before all the people on me; look out, I tell you!

LULU—[*As they all surround KADIDIA.*] But you're crying, sweetheart! Why are you crying?

PUNTSCHU—By God, she's really been crying! Who's done anything to hurt you, little goddess?

LUDMILLA—[*Kneels before her and folds her in her arms.*] Tell me, cherub, what bad thing has happened. Do you want a cookie? Do you want some chocolate?

MAGELONE—It's just nerves. The child's getting them much too soon. It would be best, anyway, if no one paid any attention to her!

PUNTSCHU—That sounds like you! You're a pretty mother! The courts'll take the child away from you yet and appoint me her guardian! [*Stroking KADIDIA's cheeks.*] Isn't that so, my little goddess?

GESCHWITZ—I should be glad if we could start the baccarat again at last! [*All go into the dining-room again. LULU is held back at the door by BOB, who comes from the upper entrance.*]

LULU—[*When BOB has whispered to her.*] Certainly! Let him come in! [*BOB opens the hall door and lets SCHIGOLCH enter, in evening dress, his patent-leather shoes much worn, and keeping on his shabby opera hat.*]

SCHIGOLCH—[*With a look at BOB.*] Where did you get him from?

LULU—The circus.

SCHIGOLCH—How much does he get?

LULU—Ask him if it interests you. [*To BOB.*] Shut the doors. [*BOB goes out lower left, shutting the door behind him.*]

SCHIGOLCH—[*Sitting down.*] The truth is, I'm in need of money. I've hired a flat for my mistress.

LULU—Have you taken another mistress here, too?

SCHIGOLCH—She's from Frankfort. In her youth she was mistress to the King of Naples. She tells me every day she was once very bewitching.

LULU—[*Outwardly with complete composure.*] Does she need the money very badly?

SCHIGOLCH—She wants to fit up her own apartments. Such sums are of no account to y o u. [*LULU is suddenly overcome with a fit of weeping.*]

LULU—[*Flinging herself at SCHIGOLCH.*] O God Almighty!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Patting her.*] Well? What is it now?

LULU—[*Sobbing violently.*] It's too horrible!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Draws her onto his knee and holds her in his arms like a little child.*] Hm—You're trying to do too much, child. You must go to bed, now and then, with a story.—Cry, that's right, cry it all out. It used to shake you just so fifteen years ago. Nobody has screamed since then, the way you could scream! You didn't wear any white tufts

on your head then, nor any transparent stockings on your legs: you had neither shoes nor stockings then.

LULU—[*Crying.*] Take me home with you! Take me home with you to-night! Please! We'll find carriages enough downstairs!

SCHIGOLCH—I'll take you with me; I'll take you with me.—What is it?

LULU—It's going round my neck! I'm to be shown up!

SCHIGOLCH—By whom? Who's showing you up?

LULU—The acrobat.

SCHIGOLCH—[*With the utmost composure.*] I'll look after him.

LULU—Look after him! Please, look after him! Then do with me what you will!

SCHIGOLCH—If he comes to me, he's done for. My window is over the water. But [*shaking his head*] he won't come; he won't come.

LULU—What number do you live at?

SCHIGOLCH—376, the last house before the hippodrome.

LULU—I'll send him there. He'll come with the crazy woman that creeps about my feet. He'll come this very evening. Go home and let them find it comfortable.

SCHIGOLCH—Just let them come.

LULU—To-morrow bring me the gold rings he wears in his ears.

SCHIGOLCH—Has he got rings in his ears?

LULU—You can take them out before you let him

down. He doesn't notice anything when he's drunk.

SCHIGOLCH—And then, child—what then?

LULU—Then I'll give you the money for your mistress.

SCHIGOLCH—I call that pretty stingy.

LULU—And whatever else you want! Whatever I have.

SCHIGOLCH—It'll soon be ten years since we knew each other.

LULU—Is that all?—But you've got a mistress.

SCHIGOLCH—My Frankforter is no longer of today.

LULU—But then swear!

SCHIGOLCH—Haven't I always kept my word to you?

LULU—Swear that you'll look after him.

SCHIGOLCH—I'll look after him.

LULU—Swear it to me! Swear it to me!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Puts his hand on her ankle.*] By everything that's holy! To-night, if he comes——

LULU—By everything that's holy!—How that cools me!

SCHIGOLCH—How this heats me!

LULU—Oh, do drive straight home. They'll come in half an hour! Take a carriage!

SCHIGOLCH—I'm going.

LULU—Quick! Please!— —All-powerful——

SCHIGOLCH—Why do you stare at me so again already?

LULU—Nothing— . . .

SCHIGOLCH—Well? Is your tongue frozen on you?

LULU—My garter's broken.

SCHIGOLCH—What if it is? Is that all?

LULU—What does that augur?

SCHIGOLCH—What does it? I'll fasten it for you if you'll keep still.

LULU—That augurs misfortune!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Yawning.*] Not for you, child. Cheer up, I'll look after him! [*Exit. LULU puts her left foot on a foot-stool, fastens her garter, and goes out into the card-room. Then RODRIGO is cuffed in from the dining-room, lower left, by CASTI-PIANI.*]

RODRIGO—You can treat me decently anyway!

CASTI-PIANI — [*Still perfectly unemotional.*] Whatever would induce me to do that? I wish to know what you said to her here a little while ago.

RODRIGO—Then you can be very fond of me!

CASTI-PIANI—Will you bandy words with me, dog? You demanded that she go up in the lift with you!

RODRIGO—That's a shameless, perfidious lie!

CASTI-PIANI—She told me so herself. You threatened to denounce her if she didn't go with you.—Shall I shoot you on the spot?

RODRIGO—The shameless hussy! As if anything like that could occur to me!—Even if I should want to have her, God knows I don't first need to threaten her with prison!

CASTI-PIANI—Thank you. That's all I wanted to know. [*Exit, upper left.*]

RODRIGO—Such a hound! A fellow I could throw

up onto the roof so he'd stick like a Limburger cheese!—Come back here, so I can wind your guts round your neck. That would be even better!

LULU—[*Enters, lower left; merrily.*] Where were you? I've been hunting for you like a pin.

RODRIGO—I've shown him what it means to start anything with me!

LULU—Whom?

RODRIGO—Your Casti-Piani! What made you tell him, you slut, that I wanted to seduce you?!

LULU—Did you not demand that I give myself to my late husband's son for twenty thousand in Jungfrau-shares?

RODRIGO—Because it's your duty to take pity on the poor young fellow! You shot away his father before his nose in the prime of his life! But your Casti-Piani will think it over before he comes into my sight again. I gave him one in the basket that made his tripe fly to heaven like Roman candles. If that's the best substitute you have for me, then I'm sorry I ever enjoyed your favor!

LULU—Lady Geschwitz is in the fearfulest case. She twists herself up in fits. She's at the point of jumping into the water if you let her wait any longer.

RODRIGO—What's the beast waiting for?

LULU—For you to take her with you.

RODRIGO—Then give her my regards, and she can jump into the water.

LULU—She'll lend me twenty thousand marks to save me from destruction if you will preserve her

from it herself. If you'll take her off to-night, I'll deposit twenty thousand marks to-morrow in your name at any bank you say.

RODRIGO—And if I don't take her off with me?

LULU—Denounce me! Alva and I are dead broke.

RODRIGO—Devil and damnation!

LULU—You make four people happy if you strain a point and sacrifice yourself for a worthy end.

RODRIGO—It won't go; I know that, beforehand. I've tried the thing out thoroughly. Who'd have expected such a creditable feeling in that bag o' bones! What interested me in her was her being an aristocrat. My behavior was as gentleman-like, and more, as you could find among German circus-people. If I'd only just pinched her in the calves once!

LULU—[*Watchfully.*] She is still a virgin.

RODRIGO—[*Sighing.*] If there's a God in heaven, you'll get paid for your jokes some day! I prophesy that.

LULU—Geschwitz waits. What shall I tell her?

RODRIGO—My very best wishes, and I am perverse.

LULU—I will deliver that.

RODRIGO—Wait a second. Is it certain sure I get twenty thousand marks from her?

LULU—Ask herself!

RODRIGO—Then tell her I'm ready. I await her in the dining-room. I must just first look after a barrel of caviare. [*Exit, left. LULU opens the rear door and calls in a clear voice "Martha!" COUNTESS GESCHWITZ enters, closing the door behind her.*]

LULU—[*Pleased.*] Dear heart, you can save me from death to-night.

GESCHWITZ—How?

LULU—By going to a certain house with the acrobat.

GESCHWITZ—What for, dear?

LULU—He says you must belong to him this very night or he'll denounce me to-morrow.

GESCHWITZ—You know I can't belong to any man. My fate has not permitted that.

LULU—If you don't please him, that's his own fix. Why has he fallen in love with you?

GESCHWITZ—But he'll get as brutal as a hangman. He'll revenge himself for his disappointment and beat my head in. I've been through that already. . . . Can you not possibly spare me this ultimate test?

LULU—What will you gain by his denouncing me?

GESCHWITZ—I have still enough left of my fortune to take us to America together in the steerage. There you'd be safe from all your pursuers.

LULU—[*Pleased and gay.*] I want to stay here. I can never be happy in any other city. You must tell him that you can't live without him. Then he'll feel flattered and be gentle as a lamb. You must pay the coachman, too: give him this paper with the address on it. 376 is a fourth-class hotel where they're expecting you with him this evening.

GESCHWITZ—[*Shuddering.*] How can such a monstrosity save your life? I don't understand that. You have conjured up to torture me the most terrible fate that can fall upon outlawed me!

LULU—[*Watchful.*] Perhaps the encounter will cure you.

GESCHWITZ—[*Sighing.*] O Lulu, if an eternal retribution does exist, I hope I may not have to answer then for you. I cannot make myself believe that no God watches over us. Yet you are probably right that there is nothing there, for how can an insignificant worm like me have provoked his wrath so as to experience only horror there where all living creation swoons for bliss?

LULU—You needn't complain. When you are happy you're a hundred thousand times happier than one of us ordinary mortals ever is!

GESCHWITZ—I know that too! I envy no one! But I am still waiting. You have deceived me so often already.

LULU—I am yours, my darling, if you quiet Mr. Acrobat till to-morrow. He only wants his vanity placated. You must beseech him to take pity on you.

GESCHWITZ—And to-morrow?

LULU—I await you, my heart. I shall not open my eyes till you come: see no chambermaid, receive no hairdresser, not open my eyes before you are with me.

GESCHWITZ—Then let him come.

LULU—But you must throw yourself at his head, dear! Have you got the house-number?

GESCHWITZ—Three-seventy-six. But quick now!

LULU—[*Calls into the dining-room.*] Ready, my darling?

RODRIGO—[*Entering.*] The ladies will pardon my mouth's being full.

GESCHWITZ—[*Seizing his hand.*] I implore you, have mercy on my need!

RODRIGO—A la bonne heure! Let us mount the scaffold! [*Offers her his arm.*]

LULU—Good night, children! [*Accompanies them into the corridor . . . then quickly returns with BOB.*] Quick, quick, Bob! We must get away this moment! You escort me! But we must change clothes!

BOB—[*Curt and clear.*] As the gracious lady bids.

LULU—Oh what, gracious lady! You give me your clothes and put on mine. Come! [*Exeunt into the dining-room. Noise in the card-room, the doors are torn open, and PUNTSCHU, HEILMANN, ALVA, BIANETTA, MAGELONE, KADIDIA and LUDMILLA enter, HEILMANN holding a piece of paper with a glowing Alpine peak at its top.*]

HEILMANN—[*To PUNTSCHU.*] Will you accept this share of Jungfrau-stock, sir?

PUNTSCHU—But that paper has no exchange, my friend.

HEILMANN—You rascal! You just don't want to give me my revenge!

MAGELONE—[*To BIANETTA.*] Have you any idea what it's all about?

LUDMILLA—Puntschu has taken all his money from him, and now gives up the game.

HEILMANN—Now he's got cold feet, the filthy Jew!

PUNTSCHU—How have I given up the game? How have I got cold feet? The gentleman has merely to lay plain cash! Is this my banking-office I'm in? He can proffer me his trash to-morrow morning!

HEILMANN—Trash you call that? The stock to my knowledge is at 210!

PUNTSCHU—Yesterday it was at 210, you're right. To-day, it's just nowhere. And to-morrow you'll find nothing cheaper or more tasteful to paper your stairs with.

ALVA—But how is that possible? Then we would be down and out!

PUNTSCHU—Well, what am I to say, who have lost my whole fortune in it! To-morrow morning I shall have the pleasure of taking up the struggle for an assured existence for the thirty-sixth time!

MAGELONE—[*Pressing forward.*] Am I dreaming or do I really understand the Jungfrau-stock has fallen?

PUNTSCHU—Fallen even lower than you! Tho you can use 'em for curl-paper.

MAGELONE—O God in Heaven! Ten years' work! [*Falls in a faint.*]

KADIDIA—Wake up, Mama! Wake up!

BIANETTA—Say, Mr. Puntschu, where will you eat this evening, since you've lost your whole fortune?

PUNTSCHU—Wherever you like, young lady! Take me where you will, but quickly! Here it's get-

ting quite alarming. [*Exeunt PUNTSCHU and BIANETTA.*]

HEILMANN—[*Squeezing up his stock and flinging it to the ground.*] That is what one gets from this pack!

LUDMILLA—Why did you speculate on the Jungfrau too? But just send a few little notes on the company here to the German police, and you may still win something in the end.

HEILMANN—I've never tried that yet, but if you want to help me——?

LUDMILLA—Let's go to an all-night restaurant. Do you know the Five-footed Calf?

HEILMANN—I'm very sorry——

LUDMILLA—Or the Sucking Lamb, or the Smoking Dog? They're all right near here. We'll be all by ourselves there, and before dawn we'll have a little article ready.

HEILMANN—Don't you sleep?

LUDMILLA—Oh, of course; but not at night. [*Exeunt HEILMANN and LUDMILLA.*]

ALVA—[*Who has been trying to resuscitate MAGELONE.*] Ice-cold hands! Ah, what a splendid woman! We must undo her waist. Come, Kadidia, undo your mother's waist! She's so fearfully tight-laced.

KADIDIA — [*Without stirring.*] I'm afraid. [*LULU enters lower left in a jackey-cap, red jacket, white leather breeches and riding boots, a riding cape over her shoulders.*]

LULU—Have you any cash, Alva?

ALVA—[*Looking up.*] Have you gone crazy?

LULU—In two minutes the police'll be here. We are denounced. You can stay, of course, if you're eager to!

ALVA—[*Springing up.*] Merciful Heaven! [*Exeunt ALVA and LULU.*]

KADIDIA — [*Shaking her mother, in tears.*] Mama, Mama! Wake up! They've all run away!

MAGELONE—[*Coming to herself.*] And youth gone! And my best days behind me! Oh, this life!

KADIDIA—But I'm young, Mama! Why shouldn't I earn any money? I don't want to go back to the convent! Please, Mama, keep me with you!

MAGELONE—God bless you, sweetheart! You don't know what you say— Oh, no, I shall look around for a vaudeville engagement, and sing the people my misfortunes with the Jungfrau-stock. Things like that are always applauded.

KADIDIA—But you've got no voice, Mama!

MAGELONE—Ah, yes, that's true!

KADIDIA—Take me with you into vaudeville!

MAGELONE—No, it would break my heart!—But, well, if it can't be otherwise, and you're so made for it,—I can't change things!—Yes, we can go to the Olympia together to-morrow!

KADIDIA—O Mama, how glad that makes me feel! [*A plain-clothes detective enters, upper left.*]

DETECTIVE—In the name of the law—I arrest you!

CASTI-PIANI — [*Following him, bored.*] What sort of nonsense is that? That isn't the right one!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—*An attic room, without windows, but with two skylights, under one of which stands a bowl filled with rain-water. Down right, a door thru a board partition into a sort of cubicle under the slanting roof. Near it, a wobbly flower-table with a bottle and a smoking oil-lamp on it. Upper right, a worn-out couch. Door centre; near it, a chair without a seat. Down left, below the entrance door, a torn gray mattress. None of the doors can shut tight.*

The rain beats on the roof. SCHIGOLCH in a long gray overcoat lies on the mattress; ALVA on the couch, wrapped in a plaid whose straps still hang on the wall above him.

SCHIGOLCH—The rain's drumming for the parade.

ALVA—Cheerful weather for her first appearance! I dreamt just now we were dining together at the Olympia. Bianetta was with us there again. The tablecloth was dripping on all four sides with champagne.

SCHIGOLCH—Ya, ya. And I was dreaming of a Christmas pudding. [LULU appears with her rather short hair falling to her shoulders, barefoot, in a torn black dress.] Where have you been, child? Curling your hair first?

ALVA—She only does that to revive old memories.

LULU—If one could only get warmed up a little, from one of you!

ALVA—Are you going to enter barefoot on your pilgrimage?

SCHIGOLCH—The first step always costs all kinds of moaning and groaning. Twenty years ago it was no whit better, and what she has learned since then! The coals only have to be blown. When she's been at it a week, not ten locomotives will hold her in our miserable attic.

ALVA—The bowl is running over.

LULU—What shall I do with the water?

ALVA—Pour it out the window. [LULU gets up on the chair and empties the bowl thru the skylight.]

LULU—It looks as if the rain were going to let up at last.

SCHIGOLCH—You're wasting the time when the clerks go home after supper.

LULU—Would to God I were lying somewhere where no step would wake me any more!

ALVA—Would that I were, too! Why prolong this life? Let's rather starve to death together this very evening in peace and concord! Aren't we at the last stage now?

LULU—Why don't you go out and get us something to eat? You've never earned a penny in your whole life!

ALVA—In this weather, when no one would kick a dog from his door?

LULU—But me! I, with the little blood I have left in my limbs, I am to stop your mouths!

ALVA—I don't touch a farthing of the money!

SCHIGOLCH—Let her go, just! I long for one more Christmas pudding; then I've had enough.

ALVA—And I long for one more beefsteak and a cigarette; then die! I was just dreaming of a cigarette, such as has never yet been smoked!

SCHIGOLCH—She'll rather see us finished before her eyes, than go and do herself a little pleasure.

LULU—The people on the street will sooner leave cloak and coat in my hands than go with me for nothing! If you hadn't sold my clothes, I at least wouldn't need to be afraid of the lamp-light. I'd like to see the woman who could earn anything in the rags I'm wearing on my body!

ALVA—I have left nothing human untried. As long as I had money I spent whole nights making up tables with which one couldn't help winning against the cleverest card-sharps. And yet evening after evening I lost more than if I had shaken out gold by the pailful. Then I offered my services to the courtesans; but they don't take anyone that the courts haven't first branded, and they see at the first glance if one's related to the guillotine or not.

SCHIGOLCH—Ya, ya.

ALVA—I spared myself no disillusionments; but when I made jokes, they laughed at me, and when I behaved as respectable as I am, they boxed my ears, and when I tried being smutty, they got so chaste and maidenly that my hair stood up on my head for horror. Him who has not prevailed over society, they have no confidence in.

SCHIGOLCH—Won't you kindly put on your boots now, child? I don't think I shall grow much older in this lodging. It's months since I had any feeling in the ends of my toes. Toward midnight, I'll drink a bit more down in the pub. The lady that keeps it told me yesterday I still had a serious chance of becoming her lover.

LULU—In the name of the three devils, I'll go down! [*She puts to her mouth the bottle on the flower-table.*]

SCHIGOLCH—So they can smell your stink a half-hour off!

LULU—I shan't drink it all.

ALVA—You won't go down. You're my woman. You shan't go down. I forbid it!

LULU—What would you forbid your woman when you can't support yourself?

ALVA—Whose fault is that? Who but my woman has laid me on the sick-bed?

LULU—Am *I* sick?

ALVA—Who has trailed me thru the dung? Who has made me my father's murderer?

LULU—Did *y o u* shoot him? He didn't lose much, but when I see you lying there I could hack off both my hands for having sinned so against my judgment! [*She goes out, into her room.*]

ALVA—She infected me from her Casti-Piani. It's a long time since she was susceptible to it herself!

SCHIGOLCH—Little devils like her can't begin putting up with it too soon, if angels are ever going to come out of them.

ALVA—She ought to have been born Empress of Russia. Then she'd have been in the right place. A second Catherine the Second! [*LULU re-enters with a worn-out pair of boots, and sits on the floor to put them on.*]

LULU—If only I don't go headfirst down the stairs! Ugh, how cold! Is there anything in the world more dismal than a daughter of joy?

SCHIGOLCH—Patience, patience! It's just a question of getting the right push into the business.

LULU—It'll be all right with me! No one need pity me any more. [*Puts the bottle to her lips.*] That fires one!—O accursed! [*Exit.*]

SCHIGOLCH—When we hear her coming, we must creep into my cubby-hole awhile.

ALVA—I'm damned sorry for her! When I think back. . . . I grew up with her in a way, you know.

SCHIGOLCH—She'll hold out as long as I live, anyway.

ALVA—We treated each other at first like brother and sister. Mama was still living then. I met her by chance one morning when she was dressing. Dr. Goll had been called for a consultation. Her hair-dresser had read my first poem, that I'd had printed in "Society": "Follow thy pack far over the mountains; it will return again, covered with sweat and dust——"

SCHIGOLCH—Oh, ya!

ALVA—And then she came, in rose-colored muslin, with nothing under it but a white satin slip—for the Spanish ambassador's ball. Dr. Goll seemed to

feel his death near. He asked me to dance with her, so she shouldn't cause any mad acts. Papa meanwhile never turned his eyes from us, and all thru the waltz she was looking over my shoulder, only at him. . . . Afterwards she shot him. It is unbelievable.

SCHIGOLCH—I've only got a strong doubt whether anyone will bite any more.

ALVA—I shouldn't like to advise anyone to! [SCHIGOLCH *grunts*.]—At that time, tho she was a fully developed woman, she had the expression of a five-year-old, joyous, utterly healthy child. And she was only three years younger than me then—but how long ago it is now! For all her immense superiority in matters of practical life, she let me explain "Tristan and Isolde" to her—and how entrancingly she could listen! Out of the little sister who even in her marriage still felt like a schoolgirl, came the unhappy, hysterical artist's wife. Out of the artist's wife came then the spouse of my murdered father, and out of her came, then, my mistress. Well, so that is the way of the world. Who will prevail against it?

SCHIGOLCH—If only she doesn't skid away from the gentlemen with honorable intentions and bring us up instead some vagabond she's exchanged her heart's secrets with.

ALVA—I kissed her for the first time in her rustling bridal dress. But afterwards she didn't remember it. . . . All the same, I believe she had thought of me even in my father's arms. It can't

have been often with him: he had his best time behind him, and she deceived him with coachman and bootblack; but when she did give herself to him, then *I* stood before her soul. That was the way, without my realizing it, that she acquired this dreadful power over me.

SCHIGOLCH—There they are! [*Heavy steps are heard mounting the stairs.*]

ALVA—[*Starting up.*] I will not endure it! I'll throw the fellow out!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Wearily picks himself up, takes ALVA by the collar and cuffs him toward the left.*] Forward, forward! How is the young man to confess his trouble to her with us two sprawling round here?

ALVA—But if he demands other things—low things—of her?

SCHIGOLCH—If, well, if! What more will he demand of her? He's only a man like the rest of us!

ALVA—We must leave the door open.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Pushing ALVA in, right.*] Nonsense! Lie down!

ALVA—I'll hear it soon enough. Heaven spare him!

SCHIGOLCH—[*Closing the door, from inside.*] Shut up!

ALVA—[*Faintly.*] He'd better look out! [*LULU enters, followed by HUNDEI, a gigantic figure with a smooth-shaven, rosy face, sky-blue eyes, and a friendly smile. He wears a tall hat and overcoat and carries a dripping umbrella.*]

LULU—Here's where I live. [HUNIDEI *puts his finger to his lips and looks at LULU significantly. Then he opens his umbrella and puts it on the floor, rear, to dry.*] Of course, I know it isn't very comfortable here. [HUNIDEI *comes forward and puts his hand over her mouth.*] What do you mean me to understand by that? [HUNIDEI *puts his hand over her mouth, and his finger to his lips.*] I don't know what that means. [HUNIDEI *quickly stops her mouth. LULU frees herself.*] We're quite alone here. No one will hear us. [HUNIDEI *lays his finger on his lips, shakes his head, points at LULU, opens his mouth as if to speak, points at himself and then at the door.*] Good Lord, he's a monster! [HUNIDEI *stops her mouth; then goes rear, folds up his overcoat and lays it over the chair near the door; then comes down with a broad smile, takes LULU's head in both his hands and kisses her on the forehead. The door, right, half opens.*]

SCHIGOLCH—[*Behind the door.*] He's got a screw loose.

ALVA—He'd better look out!

SCHIGOLCH—She couldn't have brought up anything drearier!

LULU—[*Stepping back.*] I hope you're going to give me something! [HUNIDEI *stops her mouth and presses a gold-piece in her hand, then looks at her uncertain, questioningly, as she examines it and throws it from one hand to the other.*] All right, it's good. [Puts it in her pocket. HUNIDEI *quickly stops her mouth, gives her a few silver coins,*

and glances at her commandingly.] Oh, that's nice of you! [HUNIDEI leaps madly about the room, brandishing his arms and staring upward in despair. LULU cautiously nears him, throws an arm round him and kisses him on the mouth. Laughing soundlessly, he frees himself from her and looks questioningly around. She takes up the lamp and opens the door to her room. He goes in smiling, taking off his hat. The stage is dark save for what light comes thru the cracks of the door. ALVA and SCHIGOLCH creep out on all fours.]

ALVA—They're gone.

SCHIGOLCH—[*Behind him.*] Wait.

ALVA—One can hear nothing here.

SCHIGOLCH—You've heard that often enough!

ALVA—I will kneel before her door.

SCHIGOLCH—Little mother's sonny! [*Presses past ALVA, gropes across the stage to HUNIDEI's coat, and searches the pockets. ALVA crawls to LULU's door.*] Gloves, nothing more! [*Turns the coat round, searches the inside pockets, pulls a book out that he gives to ALVA.*] Just see what that is. [*ALVA holds the book to the light.*]

ALVA—[*Wearily deciphering the title-page.*] Warnings to pious pilgrims and such as wish to be so. Very helpful. Price, 2s. 6d.

SCHIGOLCH—It looks to me as if God had left him pretty completely. [*Lays the coat over the chair again and makes for the cubby-hole.*] There's nothing to these people. The country's best time's behind it!

ALVA—Life is never as bad as it's painted. [*He, too, creeps back.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Not even a silk muffler he's got and yet in Germany we creep on our bellies before this rabble.

ALVA—Come, let's vanish again.

SCHIGOLCH—She only thinks of herself, and takes the first man that runs across her path. Hope the dog remembers her the rest of his life! [*They disappear, left, shutting the door behind them. LULU re-enters, setting the lamp on the table. HUNIDEI follows.*]

LULU—Will you come to see me again? [*HUNIDEI stops her mouth. She looks upward in a sort of despair and shakes her head. HUNIDEI, putting his coat on, approaches her grinning; she throws her arms around his neck; he gently frees himself, kisses her hand, and turns to the door. She starts to accompany him, but he signs to her to stay behind and noiselessly leaves the room. SCHIGOLCH and ALVA re-enter.*]

LULU—[*Tonelessly.*] How he has stirred me up!

ALVA—How much did he give you?

LULU—[*As before.*] Here it is! All! Take it! I'm going down again.

SCHIGOLCH—We can still live like princes up here.

ALVA—He's coming back.

SCHIGOLCH—Then let's just retire again, quick.

ALVA—He's after his prayer-book. Here it is. It must have fallen out of his coat.

LULU—[*Listening.*] No, that isn't he. That's someone else.

ALVA—Someone's coming up. I hear it quite plainly.

LULU—Now there's someone tapping at the door. Who can it be?

SCHIGOLCH—Probably a good friend he's recommended us to. Come in! [COUNTESS GESCHWITZ enters, in poor clothes, with a canvas roll in her hand.]

GESCHWITZ—[*To LULU.*] If I've come at a bad time, I'll turn around again. The truth is, I haven't spoken to a living soul for ten days. I must just tell you right off, I haven't received any money. My brother never answered me at all.

SCHIGOLCH—And now your ladyship would like to stretch her feet out under o u r table?

LULU—[*Tonelessly.*] I'm going down again.

GESCHWITZ—Where are you going, in this finery?—Tho penniless, I have come not wholly empty-handed. I bring you something else. On my way here an old-clothes-man offered me twelve shillings for it, yes—but I could not force myself to part from it. You can sell it if you want to, tho.

SCHIGOLCH—What is it?

ALVA—Let us see it. [*Takes the canvas and unrolls it. Visibly rejoiced.*] Oh, by God, it's Lulu's portrait!

LULU—[*Screaming.*] Monster, you brought that here? Get it out of my sight! Throw it out of the window!

ALVA — [*Suddenly with renewed life, deeply pleased.*] Why, I should like to know? Looking on this picture I regain my self-respect. It makes my fate comprehensible to me. Everything we have endured gets clear as day. [*In a somewhat elegiac strain.*] Let him who feels secure in his respectable citizenship when he sees these blossoming pouting lips, these child-eyes, big and innocent, this rose-white body abounding in life,—let him cast the first stone at us!

SCHIGOLCH—We must nail it up. It will make an excellent impression on our patrons.

ALVA—[*Energetic.*] There's a nail sticking all ready for it in the wall.

SCHIGOLCH—But how did you come upon this acquisition?

GESCHWITZ—I secretly cut it out of the wall in your house, there, after you were gone.

ALVA—Too bad the color's got rubbed off round the edges. You didn't roll it up carefully enough. [*Fastens it to a high nail in the wall.*]

SCHIGOLCH—It's got to have another one underneath if it's going to hold. It makes the whole flat look more elegant.

ALVA—Let me alone; I know how I'll do it. [*He tears several nails out of the wall, pulls off his left boot, and with its heel nails the edges of the picture to the wall.*]

SCHIGOLCH—It's just got to hang awhile again, to get its proper effect. Whoever looks at that'll imagine afterwards he's been in an Indian harem.

ALVA—[*Putting on his boot again, standing up proudly.*] Her body was at its highest point of development when that picture was painted. The lamp, dear child! Seems to me it's got extraordinarily dark.

GESCHWITZ—He must have been an eminently gifted artist who painted that!

LULU—[*Perfectly composed again, stepping before the picture with the lamp.*] Didn't you know him, then?

GESCHWITZ—No. It must have been long before my time. I only occasionally heard chance remarks of yours, that he had cut his throat from persecution-mania.

ALVA—[*Comparing the picture with LULU.*] The child-like expression in the eyes is still absolutely the same in spite of all she has lived thru since. [*In joyous excitement.*] But the dewy freshness that covers her skin, the sweet-smelling breath from her lips, the rays of light that beam from her white forehead, and this challenging splendor of young flesh in throat and arms——

SCHIGOLCH—All that's gone with the rubbish wagon. She can say with self-assurance: That was me once! The man she falls into the hands of to-day 'll have no conception of what we were when we were young.

ALVA—[*Cheerfully.*] God be thanked, we don't notice the gradual decline when we see a person all the time. [*Lightly.*] The woman blooms for us in the moment when she hurls the man to destruction

for the rest of his life. That is, so to say, her nature and her destiny.

SCHIGOLCH—Down in the street-lamp's shimmer she's still a match for a dozen walking spectres. The man who still wants to make connections at this hour looks out more for heart-qualities than mere physical good points. He decides for the pair of eyes from which the least thievery sparkles.

LULU—[*Now as pleased as ALVA.*] I shall see if you're right. Adieu.

ALVA—[*In sudden anger.*] You shall not go down again, as I live!

GESCHWITZ—Where do you want to go?

ALVA—Down to fetch up a man.

GESCHWITZ—Lulu!

ALVA—She's done it once to-day already.

GESCHWITZ—Lulu, Lulu, where you go I go, too.

SCHIGOLCH—If you want to put your bones up for sale, kindly hunt up a district of your own!

GESCHWITZ—Lulu, I shall not stir from your side! I have weapons upon me.

SCHIGOLCH—Confound it all, her ladyship means to fish with our bait!

LULU—You're killing me. I can't stand it here any more. [*Exit.*]

GESCHWITZ—You need fear nothing. I am with you. [*Follows her.*]

ALVA—[*Whimpering, throws himself on his couch. SCHIGOLCH swears, loudly and grumbling.*] I guess there's not much more good to expect on this side!

SCHIGOLCH—We ought to have held the creature back by the throat. She'll scare away everything that breathes with her aristocratic death's head.

ALVA—She's flung me onto a sick-bed and larded me with thorns outside and in!

SCHIGOLCH — [*On GESCHWITZ still.*] All the same, she's got enough spirit in her for ten men, she has!

ALVA—No mortally wounded man'll ever be more thankful for his coup-de-grâce than I!

SCHIGOLCH—If she hadn't enticed the acrobat into my place that time, we'd still have had him round our necks to-day.

ALVA—I see it trembling above my head as Tantalus saw the branch with the golden apples!

SCHIGOLCH—[*On his mattress.*] Won't you turn up the lamp a little?

ALVA—I wonder, can a simple, natural man in the wilderness suffer so unspeakably, too?—God, God, what have I made of my life!

SCHIGOLCH—What's the beastly weather made of my ulster!—When *I* was five-and-twenty, I knew how to help myself!

ALVA—Not everyone has had the joy of my sunny, glorious youth!

SCHIGOLCH—I guess it's going right out. When they come back it'll be as dark in here again as in the womb.

ALVA—With the clearest consciousness of my purpose I sought the companionship of people who'd never read a book in their lives. With self-denial,

with exaltation, I clung to the elements, that I might be carried to the loftiest heights of poetic fame. The reckoning was false. I am the martyr of my calling. Since the death of my father I have not written a single verse!

SCHIGOLCH—If only they haven't stayed together! Nobody but a silly boy will go with two, no matter what.

ALVA—They've not stayed together!

SCHIGOLCH—That's what I hope. If need be, she'll keep the creature off from her with kicks.

ALVA—One, risen from the dregs, is the most celebrated man of his nation; another, born in the purple, lies in the mud and cannot die!

SCHIGOLCH—Here they come!

ALVA—And what blessed hours of mutual joy in creation they had lived thru with each other!

SCHIGOLCH—That they can rightly do for the first time now!—We must hide again.

ALVA—I stay here.

SCHIGOLCH—Just what do you pity them for?—He who spends his money has his good reasons for it!

ALVA—I have no longer the moral courage to let my comfort be disturbed for a miserable sum of money! [*He wraps himself up in his plaid.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Noblesse oblige! A respectable man does what he owes his position. [*He hides, left.* LULU opens the door, saying "Come right in, dearie," and there enters PRINCE KUNGU POTI, heir-apparent of Uahubee, in a light suit, white spats, tan button-boots, and a gray tall hat. His speech, interrupted

with frequent hiccoughs, abounds with the peculiar African hiss-sounds.]

KUNGU POTI—God damn—it's dark on the stairs!

LULU—It's lighter here, sweetheart. [*Pulling him forward by the hand.*] Come on!

KUNGU POTI—But it's cold here, awful cold!

LULU—Have some brandy?

KUNGU POTI — Brandy? You bet—always! Brandy's good!

LULU—[*Giving him the bottle.*] I don't know where the glass is.

KUNGU POTI — Doesn't matter. [*Drinks.*] Brandy! Lots of it!

LULU—You're a nice-looking young man.

KUNGU POTI—My father's the emperor of Uahubee. I've got six wives here, two Spanish, two English, two French. Well—I don't like my wives. Always I must take a bath, take a bath, take a bath. . . .

LULU—How much will you give me?

KUNGU POTI—Gold! You trust me, you'll have gold! One gold-piece. I always give gold-pieces.

LULU—You can give it to me later, but show it to me.

KUNGU POTI—I never pay beforehand.

LULU—But you can show it to me, tho!

KUNGU POTI—Don't understand, don't understand! Come, Ragapsishimulara! [*Seizing LULU round the waist.*] Come on!

LULU—[*Defending herself with all her strength.*] Let me be! Let me be! [*ALVA, who has risen pain-*

fully from his couch, sneaks up to KUNGU POTI from behind and pulls him back by the collar.]

KUNGU POTI — [*Whirling round.*] Oh! Oh! This is a murder-hole! Come, my friend, I'll put you to sleep! [*Strikes him over the head with a loaded cane. ALVA groans and falls in a heap.*] Here's a sleeping-draught! Here's opium for you! Sweet dreams to you! Sweet dreams! [*Then he gives LULU a kiss; pointing to ALVA.*] He dreams of you, Ragapsishimulara! Sweet dreams! [*Rushing to the door.*] Here's the door! [*Exit.*]

LULU—But I'll not stay here?!—Who can stand it here now!—Rather down onto the street! [*Exit. SCHIGOLCH comes out.*]

SCHIGOLCH—Blood!—Alva!—He's got to be put away somewhere. Hop!—Or else our friends 'll get a shock from him—Alva! Alva!—He that isn't quite clear about it—— One thing or t'other; or it'll soon be too late! I'll give him legs! [*Strikes a match and sticks it into ALVA's collar. . . .*] He will have his rest. But no one sleeps here.—[*Drags him by the head into LULU's room. Returning, he tries to turn up the light.*] It'll be time for me, too, right soon now, or they'll get no more Christmas puddings down there in the tavern. God knows when she'll be coming back from her pleasure tour! [*Fixing an eye on LULU's picture.*] She doesn't understand business! She can't live off love, because her life is love.—There she comes. I'll just talk straight to her once—— [*COUNTESS GESCHWITZ enters.*] . . .

If you want to lodge with us to-night, kindly take a little care that nothing is stolen here.

GESCHWITZ—How dark it is here!

SCHIGOLCH—It gets much darker than this.—The doctor's already gone to rest.

GESCHWITZ—She sent me ahead.

SCHIGOLCH—That was sensible.—If anyone asks for me, I'm sitting downstairs in the pub.

GESCHWITZ—[*After he has gone.*] I will sit behind the door. I will look on at everything and not quiver an eyelash. [*Sits on the broken chair.*] Men and women don't know themselves—they know not what they are. Only one who is neither man nor woman knows them. Every word they say is untrue, a lie. And they do not know it, for they are to-day so and to-morrow so, according as they have eaten, drunk, and loved, or not. Only the body remains for a time what it is, and only the children have reason. The men and women are like the animals: none knows what it does. When they are happiest they bewail themselves and groan, and in their deepest misery they rejoice over every tiny morsel. It is strange how hunger takes from men and women the strength to withstand misfortune. But when they have fed full they make this world a torture-chamber, they throw away their lives to satisfy a whim, a mood. Have there ever once been men and women to whom love brought happiness? And what is their happiness, save that they sleep better and can forget it all? My God, I thank thee that thou hast not made me as these. I am not

man nor woman. My body has nothing common with their bodies. Have I a human soul? Tortured humanity has a little narrow heart; but I know it's no virtue of mine if I resign all, sacrifice all. . . . [LULU opens the door, and DR. HILTI enters. GESCHWITZ, unnoticed, remains motionless by the door.]

LULU—[*Gaily.*] Come right in! Come!—you'll stay with me all night?

DR. HILTI—[*His accent is very broad and flat.*¹] But I have no more than five shillings on me. I never take more than that when I go out.

LULU—That's enough, seeing it's you! You have such faithful eyes! Come, give me a kiss! [*She flings herself down on the couch. DR. HILTI begins to swear in his native tongue.*²] Please, don't say that.

DR. HILTI—By the devil, this is really the first time I've ever gone with a girl! You can believe me. Mass, I hadn't thought it would be like this!

LULU—Are you married?

DR. HILTI—Heaven and Hail, why do you think I am married?—No, I'm a tutor; I read philosophy at the University. The truth is, I come of a very old country family. When I was a student, I only got two gulden a week for pocket-money, and I could make better use of that than for girls!

¹ In the original he comes from Basle, Switzerland. English with a Dutch accent might offer the best equivalent.

² "Hiemäl, Härgoht, Töüfäl, Kräuzpataliohn," such is the weird appearance of all his German.

LULU—So you have never been with a woman?

DR. HILTI—Just so, yeah! But I want it now. I got engaged this evening to a country-woman of mine. She's a governess here.

LULU—Is she pretty?

DR. HILTI—Yeah, she's got a hundred thousand. —I am very much excited, as it seems to me.

LULU—[*Tossing back her hair and getting up.*] I am in luck! [*Takes the lamp.*] Well, if you please, Mr. Tutor? [*They go into her room. GESCHWITZ draws a small black revolver from her pocket and sets it to her forehead.*]

GESCHWITZ—Come, come,—beloved! [DR. HILTI tears open the door again.]

DR. HILTI—[*Plunging in.*] Insane seraphs! Someone's lying in there!

LULU—[*Lamp in hand, holds him by the sleeve.*] Stay with me!

DR. HILTI—A dead man! A corpse!

LULU—Stay with me! Stay with me!

DR. HILTI—[*Tearing away.*] A corpse is lying in there! Horrors! Hail! Heaven!

LULU—Stay with me!

DR. HILTI—Where d's it go out? [*Sees GESCHWITZ.*] And there is the devil!

LULU—Please, stop, stay!

DR. HILTI—Devil, devilled devilry!—Oh, thou eternal—— [*Exit.*]

LULU—[*Rushing after him.*] Stop! Stop!

GESCHWITZ—[*Alone, lets the revolver sink.*] Better, hang! If now she sees me lying in my blood,

she'll not weep a tear for me! I have always been to her but the docile tool that she could use for the most difficult tasks. From the first day she has abhorred me from the depths of her soul.—Shall I not rather jump from the bridge? Which could be colder, the water or her heart? I would dream till I was drowned.—Better, hang!—Stab?—Hm, there would be no use in that—How often have I dreamt that she kissed me! But a minute more; an owl knocks there at the window, and I wake up—Better, hang! Not water; water is too clean for me. [*Starting up.*] There!—There! There it is!—Quick now, before she comes! [*Takes the plaid-straps from the wall, climbs on the chair, fastens them to a hook in the doorpost, puts her head thru them, kicks the chair away, and falls to the ground.*] Accursed life!—Accursed life!—Could it be before me still?—Let me speak to your heart just once, my angel! But you are cold!—I am not to go yet! Perhaps I am even to have been happy once.—Listen to him, Lulu! I am not to go yet! [*She drags herself before LULU's picture, sinks on her knees and folds her hands.*] My adoréd angel! My love! My star!—Have mercy upon me, pity me, pity me, pity me! [*LULU opens the door, and JACK enters—a thick-set man of elastic movements, with a pale face, inflamed eyes, arched and heavy brows, a drooping mustache, thin imperial and shaggy whiskers, and fiery red hands with gnawed nails. His eyes are fixed on the ground. He wears*

a dark overcoat and a little round felt hat. Entering, he notices GESCHWITZ.]

JACK—Who is that?

LULU—That's my sister, sir. She's crazy. I don't know how to get rid of her.

JACK—Your mouth looks beautiful.

LULU—It's my mother's.

JACK—Looks like it. How much do you want? I haven't got much money.

LULU—Won't you spend the night with me here?

JACK—No, haven't got the time. I must get home.

LULU—You can tell them at home to-morrow that you missed the last 'bus and spent the night with a friend.

JACK—How much do you want?

LULU—I'm not after lumps of gold, but, well, a little something.

JACK—[*Turning.*] Good night! Good night!

LULU—[*Holds him back.*] No, no! Stay, for God's sake!

JACK—[*Goes past GESCHWITZ and opens the cubicle.*] Why should I stay here till morning? Sounds suspicious! When I'm asleep they'll turn my pockets out.

LULU—No, I won't do that! No one will! Don't go away again for that! I beg you!

JACK—How much do you want?

LULU—Then give me the half of what I said!

JACK—No, that's too much. You don't seem to have been at this long?

LULU—To-day is the first time. [GESCHWITZ, *still on her knees, has half risen toward JACK; LULU yanks her back by the straps around her neck.*] Lie down and be quiet!

JACK—Let her alone! She isn't your sister. She is in love with you. [*Strokes GESCHWITZ's head like a dog's.*] Poor beast!

LULU—Why do you stare at me so all at once?

JACK—I got your measure by the way you walked. I said to myself: That girl must have a well-built body.

LULU—But how can you tell a thing like that?

JACK—I even saw that you had a pretty mouth. But I've only got a florin on me.

LULU—Well, what difference does that make! Just give that to me!

JACK—But you'll have to give me half back, so I can take the 'bus to-morrow morning.

LULU—I have nothing on me.

JACK—Just look, though. Hunt thru your pockets!—Well, what's that? Let's see it!

LULU—[*Showing him.*] That's all I have.

JACK—Give it to me!

LULU—I'll change it to-morrow, and then give you half.

JACK—No, give it all to me.

LULU—[*Giving it.*] In God's name! But now you come! [*Takes up the lamp.*]

JACK—We need no light. The moon's out.

LULU—[*Puts the lamp down.*] As you say. [*She falls on his neck.*] I won't harm you at all!

I love you so! Don't let me beg you any longer!

JACK—All right; I'm with you. [*Follows her into the cubby-hole. The lamp goes out. On the floor under the two skylights appear two vivid squares of moonlight. Everything in the room is clearly seen.*]

GESCHWITZ—[*As in a dream.*] This is the last evening I shall spend with these people. I'm going back to Germany. My mother'll send me the money. I'll go to a university. I must fight for woman's rights; study law. . . . [LULU shrieks, and tears open the door.]

LULU—[*Barefoot, in chemise and petticoat, holding the door shut behind her.*] Help! Help! [GESCHWITZ rushes to the door, draws her revolver, and crying "Let go!" pushes LULU aside. As she aims at the door, JACK, bent double, tears it open from inside, and runs a knife into GESCHWITZ's body. She fires one shot, at the roof, and falls with suppressed crying, crumpling up. JACK tears her revolver from her and throws himself against the exit-door.]

JACK—God damn! I never saw a prettier mouth! [Sweat drips from his hairy face. His hands are bloody. He pants, gasping violently, and stares at the floor with eyes popping out of his head. LULU, trembling in every limb, looks wildly round. Suddenly she seizes the bottle, smashes it on the table, and with the broken neck in her hand rushes upon JACK. He swings up his right foot and throws her onto her back. Then he lifts her up.]

LULU—No, no!—Mercy!—Murder!—Police! Police!

JACK—Be still. You'll never get away from me again. [*Carries her in.*]

LULU — [*Within, right.*] No!—No!—No!—Ah!—Ah! . . . [*After a pause, JACK re-enters. He puts the bowl on the table.*]

JACK—That was a piece of work! [*Washing his hands.*] I am a damned lucky chap! [*Looks round for a towel.*] Not even a towel, these folks here! Hell of a wretched hole! [*He dries his hands on GESCHWITZ's petticoat.*] This invert is safe enough from me! [*To her.*] It'll soon be all up with you, too. [*Exit.*]

GESCHWITZ—[*Alone.*] Lulu!—My angel!—Let me see thee once more! I am near thee—stay near thee—forever! [*Her elbows give way.*] O cursed—!! [*Dies.*]

CURTAIN

D A M N A T I O N !

(TOD UND TEUFEL)

A Death-Dance in Three Scenes

“Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
ὅτι αἱ πόρναι
προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς
εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν
τοῦ Θεοῦ.”

ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

(*Matth.* 21. 31.)

CHARACTERS

MARQUIS CASTI-PIANI

FRÄULEIN ELFRIEDE VON MALCHUS

HERR KÖNIG

LISISKA

THREE GIRLS

SCENE—*A room with three doors, and windows with the blinds drawn. On each side, facing each other, two arm-chairs upholstered in red. In both down-stage corners are little trellis screens behind which the actor is hidden from the stage tho not from the audience. Red upholstered stools in both these corners.*

ELFRIEDE VON MALCHUS *sits in one of the arm-chairs. She is evidently uneasy. She wears a modern "reformed" dress with hat, cloak, and gloves.*

ELFRIEDE—How much longer are they going to keep me waiting? [*Long pause. She remains sitting motionless.*] How much longer are they going to keep me waiting! [*Long pause as before.*] How much longer are they going to keep me waiting here!! [*After a moment, she gets up, takes off her cloak and lays it on the chair, takes off her hat and puts it on the cloak, and then walks up and down twice with manifest excitement. Stopping, she cries again:*] How much longer will they keep me waiting here??!! [*On her last word, the MARQUIS CASTI-PIANI enters thru the centre door. He is a tall, bald-headed man, with a high forehead, great black, melancholy eyes, strong, hooked nose, and thick, drooping black mustache. He wears a black*

coat, a dark, fancy waistcoat, dark gray trousers, patent-leather shoes and a black cravat with a diamond pin.]

CASTI-PIANI—[*Bowing.*] What can I do for you, madam?

ELFRIEDE—I have already explained it to the lady, as clearly as I can possibly explain it, why I am here.

CASTI-PIANI—The lady told me why you were here. The lady told me also that you were a member of the International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic.

ELFRIEDE—That I am! I am a member of the International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. But even if I did not belong to it I could not possibly have spared myself this search! For nine months I've been on the track of this unfortunate, and everywhere I've been so far she'd just been carried off to another city. But she is in this house! She's here at this moment! The lady who was here just now admitted that, without any beating round the bush. She promised me she would send the girl here to this room, so that I could speak with her in private and undisturbed. I am waiting here now for the girl, and for no one else. I have no desire and no need to go through a second cross-examination.

CASTI-PIANI—I beg you, madam, not to excite yourself further. The girl felt she should present herself to you—respectably dressed. The lady asked me to tell you that, for she feared that in your

agitation you might be tempted to take some needlessly violent measure. And she asked me to do what I could to help you through the embarrassment which waiting in these surroundings would naturally cause you.

ELFRIEDE—[*Walking up and down.*] Pray keep your amiable conversation to yourself! There is nothing new for me now in the atmosphere of this place. The first time I entered such a house, I had to fight physical nausea. Only then did I realize what tremendous self-suppression my entrance into the Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic had involved me in. Till then I had taken part in our activities as an idle pastime, solely to avoid growing old and gray in uselessness.

CASTI-PIANI—This confession awakens in me so much sympathy that I feel tempted to ask you for your credentials as an active member of the International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. We know from experience that a lot of people crowd into that calling who have quite other ends in view than the rescue of fallen girls. If you are earnestly bent on attaining your high purposes, the strict precautions we are compelled to use will assuredly meet your approval.

ELFRIEDE—I have been a member of our Union for nearly three years now. My name is—Fräulein von Malchus.

CASTI-PIANI—Elfriede von Malchus?

ELFRIEDE—Yes, Elfriede von Malchus.—How do you know my first name?

CASTI-PIANI—Why, we read the annual reports of the Union. If I remember right, you were a distinguished speaker at last year's annual meeting in Cologne?

ELFRIEDE—I am sorry to say that for two whole years I did nothing but write and speak and speak and write, without ever working up courage to attack the white slave traffic directly, until finally the white slave traffic found a victim under my own roof, in my own family!

CASTI-PIANI—If I am rightly advised, however, only your own papers, books, and magazines were to blame for this misfortune. Apparently you did not keep them carefully enough away from the young person for whose rescue you are here at this moment?

ELFRIEDE—There you are absolutely right! I grieve to confess I cannot contradict you there! Night after night, when I had stretched under the bed-clothes, content with myself and the world, for a ten-hour sleep undisturbed by any earthly emotion, that seventeen-year-old girl crept into my study without my ever dreaming of it and glutted her love-starved imagination with the most seductive pictures of sensual pleasure, and the fearfulest vice, from my piles of books on the suppression of the white slave traffic. Silly goose that I was, in spite of my twenty-eight years, I never saw the next morning that the girl had sat up all night! I had never in my life known a sleepless night! When I went to work again in the morning I never once asked myself

how my papers could have got into such atrocious confusion!

CASTI-PIANI—If I mistake not, my dear young lady, the girl had been engaged by your parents to do the lighter housework?

ELFRIEDE—To her destruction! Yes! Mama as well as Papa was enchanted with her propriety and modesty. To Papa, who is a ministerial official and a bureaucrat of the purest water, her presence in our house was like a sunbeam. At her sudden disappearance, Papa as well as Mama stopped calling my activities for the Union an old maid's eccentricity. They called it an outright crime.

CASTI-PIANI—The girl is the illegitimate child of a wash-woman?—Do you perhaps know who her father was?

ELFRIEDE—No, I never asked her about that.—But pray who are you? How do you come to know all this?

CASTI-PIANI—Hm—the girl had read in one of your Union's publications that certain advertisements were published in the daily papers by which, under certain well-known false pretenses, the white-slavers decoyed young girls into their clutches in order to introduce them to the love-market. Accordingly, the girl looked up an insertion of that kind in the first paper that came to hand, and on finding one, wrote a very correct letter of application for the position falsely advertised in the insertion. In this way I made her acquaintance.

ELFRIEDE—And you dare tell me that—with such cynicism!

CASTI-PIANI—I dare tell you that, my dear young lady, with just such objectivity.

ELFRIEDE—[*In the utmost excitement, with fists clenched.*] So the monster who delivered up this girl to a life of shame was you!

CASTI-PIANI—[*With a disconsolate smile.*] If you guessed, my dear young lady, the hidden springs of your diabolical excitement, you would be wise enough, perhaps, to keep perfectly calm in the presence of such a monster as *I* seem to you to be.

ELFRIEDE—[*Curt.*] I don't understand that. I don't know what you mean!

CASTI-PIANI—You—are—still—a virgin?

ELFRIEDE—[*Gasping.*] How dare you put such a question to me!

CASTI-PIANI—Who in God's wide world will forbid me!—But we'll leave that. In any case, you have not married. You are, as you just informed me yourself, twenty-eight years old. These facts may be sufficient to prove to you that in comparison with other women, not to speak of that child of nature for whose rescue you have come here,—you are only to a very slight degree open to sensuous influences.

ELFRIEDE—You may be right in that.

CASTI-PIANI—I speak, of course, only with the understanding that I shall not annoy you with this discussion. I am very far from thinking you unhealthily or unnaturally constituted. But do you know, my young lady, how you have satisfied those

sensuous cravings that you have?—to be sure, as you admit, extremely weak?

ELFRIEDE—Well?

CASTI-PIANI—By joining the International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic.

ELFRIEDE—[*Restraining her anger.*] Who are you, my dear sir!—I came here to free an unfortunate girl from the claws of vice! I did not come here to listen to lectures, in very bad taste, from you.

CASTI-PIANI—Nor did I suppose you did. But you see, when viewed from this standpoint, we are more allied to one another than you in your proud little bourgeois virtue ever dreamt. On y o u nature has conferred but an extremely scant sensuous susceptibility. The storms of life have long since made a horribly chilly desert of me. But what fighting the white slave traffic is to y o u r sensual life, that, to mine, if you will still grant me something of the kind,—is the white slave traffic itself!

ELFRIEDE — [*Aroused.*] Don't dissemble so shamelessly, you vile creature! Do you think you can lull me to sleep with your fantastic s e n s e-hocus-pocus?—me, who've run after that girl from one den of vice to another like a hunted brute?! I'm not here now as a member of the Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. I'm here as an unhappy criminal who has unintentionally plunged an innocent young life into suffering and despair. I shall never be happy again as long as I live if I can't snatch this child from her ruin now.

You would have me believe an impure curiosity drives me into this house. You're a liar! You don't believe your own words! And it was not unsatisfied sensuality that made you barter this girl away, but money-greed! You lured and sold this girl because it was good business!

CASTI-PIANI—Good business! Naturally! But good business is based on profits for both parties. I may say that I do no business which is not good. Every business that is not good is immoral!—Or do you believe perhaps that the love-business is a bad business for the woman?

ELFRIEDE—How do you mean?

CASTI-PIANI—I mean simply this—I don't know whether you're just in the mood at this moment to listen to me with some attentiveness?

ELFRIEDE—Save your introduction, for God's sake!

CASTI-PIANI—Well then, I mean this: When a man finds himself in dire need there is often no choice left him but stealing or starving. But when a woman is in need, she has a third choice: the possibility of selling her love. This way out remains for the woman only because in granting her body she need not experience any emotion. Now since the world was created, woman has made use of this advantage. To speak of nothing else, man is by nature vastly superior to woman from the sheer fact that the woman suffers in childbirth——

ELFRIEDE—That's the screaming incongruity exactly! That's what I'm always saying. To bear

children is pain and care, but to beget them passes as an amusement. And nevertheless benevolent Creation (which suffers from crazy fits in many other respects, too) has laid the burden of pain and care on the weaker sex!

CASTI-PIANI—On that, young lady, we're quite of the same opinion. And now you want to rob your unfortunate sisters of the little advantage over the male which—"crazy Creation" did confer on them: the advantage of being able, in extreme need, to sell their sexual favors,—by representing this sale as an inexpressible shame! I'll say you're a fine champion of woman's rights!

ELFRIEDE—[*Almost in tears.*] That possibility of selling ourselves weighs on our oppressed sex as an unspeakable misfortune, an everlasting curse!

CASTI-PIANI—But—God in heaven knows—it isn't our fault that the buying and selling of love weighs on the female sex as an everlasting curse! We traders have no dearer aim than that this love-business should be as open and unmolested as any other honest trade! We have no loftier ideal than that prices in the love-business should be as high as they can possibly be made to be. Hurl your accusations, if you would fight the oppression of your unfortunate sex, in the face of conventional society! If you would defend your sisters' natural rights, attack first of all the International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic!

ELFRIEDE—[*Boiling over.*] I won't let you humbug me here any longer! I am firmly convinced that

you have nō serious intention of setting the girl free. While I play the fool here listening to your sociological lectures, the poor thing'll be hustled into a cab somehow, packed off to the station and transported to some place where she'll be safe all her life from members of the Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic.—Very well, I know what I have to do! [*Takes hat.*]

CASTI-PIANI—[*Smiling.*] If you guessed, dear lady, how your outburst of rage beautified your bourgeois appearance, you would not be in such a hurry to depart.

ELFRIEDE—Let me out! It's high time!

CASTI-PIANI—Where are you thinking of going now?

ELFRIEDE—You know quite as well as I do where I am going now!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Takes her by the throat, chokes her, and forces her into one of the chairs.*] You'll stay here. I've still got a word to say to you! Try to scream, go ahead, try it! We are accustomed here to every possible outcry. Shriek as loud as you can shriek!—[*Letting her go.*] I shall be surprised if I don't bring you to reason before you run straight from this house to the police!

ELFRIEDE—[*Gasping, toneless.*] It's the first time in my life violence like that has been offered me!

CASTI-PIANI—You have done so awfully much in your useless life for the uplift of the daughters of joy! Now for once do something useful for the uplift of joy! Then you needn't feel sorry for the

poor creatures any more. Because the joy-business is branded as the vulgarest, shamefullest of all professions, girls and women of good society give themselves to a man for nothing rather than let their favors be paid for! Thereby these girls and women degrade their sex in the same way as a tailor degrades his craft if he gives clothes to his customers for nothing!

ELFRIEDE—[*Still as though stunned.*] I don't understand one word of all that! I went to school when I was five and stayed there till I was fourteen. Then I had to sit on a school-bench three more years before taking my teacher's examinations. As long as I was young, our house was frequented by gentlemen of the best society. I had a proposal from one man who had inherited an estate of twenty square miles and who would have followed me to the ends of the world if I had wanted him to. But I felt I couldn't love him. Perhaps it wasn't right of me. Perhaps I was only lacking that minimum of passion which is essential to marriage under any circumstances.

CASTI-PIANI—Have you calmed down at last?

ELFRIEDE—Just explain one more thing to me. If the girl in the course of the life she's living here, brings a child into the world, who will take care of that child?

CASTI-PIANI—You take care of it! Or as a feminist, have you perhaps something on earth more important to do? So long as any woman under God's sun must still be afraid of becoming a mother,

all the "emancipation" in the world is nothing but empty gabble! Motherhood is a necessity of nature for a woman, like breathing and sleeping. And this innate right has been most barbarously restricted by conventional society. A natural child is almost as big a disgrace as the love-business itself! W h o r e here and w h o r e there! The mother of an illegitimate child is no more spared the name of whore than is a girl in this house. If ever anything in your woman's movement inspired me with loathing, it was the m o r a l i t y that you inject into your disciples on life's way. Do you imagine the love-business would ever in the world's history have been described as a disgrace if the man could have competed with the woman in the love-market? Envy! Nothing but commercial envy! Nature accorded to the woman the monopoly of being able to trade in her love. Therefore conventional society, which is governed by man, would like nothing better than over and over again to represent that trade as the most shameful of crimes!

ELFRIEDE—[*Stands up and lays her cloak over the chair. Walking up and down.*] I confess I am at this moment quite unable to tell whether your opinions on that point are right or not. But how in the world is it possible for a man of your culture, of your social views, of your intellectual eminence, to throw his life away among the vilest elements of society! God knows it may have been only your beastly brutality that has made me take your assertions seriously. But I feel very sure you've given

me things to think about for a long time to come, things I'd never in my life have thought of myself. Every winter for years I've heard from twelve to twenty lectures by all the male and female authorities on the woman movement; but I can't remember ever having heard a word that went to the bottom of the business the way your statements do.

CASTI-PIANI—[*In a singsong.*] Let us always realize quite clearly, my dear lady, that we all are as though walking in our sleep on a ridge-pole, and that any unexpected enlightenment can be the breaking of our necks.

ELFRIEDE—[*Staring at him.*] What do you mean by that?—There's something monstrous in your mind?!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Very quietly.*] I said it only in regard to your views, which so far have let you feel so innocently safe in throwing round epithets like respectable and vile as if you were specially commissioned of God to sit in judgment on your fellow-mortals.

ELFRIEDE—[*Staring at him.*] You're a great man.—You're a high-minded man!

CASTI-PIANI—Your words probe the mortal wound that I brought with me into the world and that I shall probably die of, some day. [*Throws himself into a chair.*] I am—a moralist!

ELFRIEDE—And would you bewail your fate on that account?! Because the power of making other men happy was given you? [*After a short inner struggle, she throws herself at his feet.*] Marry me,

marry me, for mercy's sake! Before I saw y o u I was never able to imagine the possibility of giving myself to a man! I am absolutely inexperienced; that I can swear to you by the sacredest oaths. Till this moment I never guessed what the word l o v e meant. With you, here, I feel it for the first time. Love lifts the lover up above his miserable self. I'm an everyday average woman, but my love for you makes me so free and fearless that nothing is impossible to me. Continue, in God's name, from crime to crime! I will go before you! Go to prison! I will go before you! Go from prison to the scaffold! I will go before you. Don't, I beseech you, don't let this fortunate opportunity escape! Marry me, marry me, marry me! So shall help come to us two poor children of men!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Stroking her head, without looking at her.*] Whether you love me or don't love me, you dear animal, is all one to me. Of course, you cannot know how many thousand times I have already had to undergo just such outbursts of emotion. Far be it from me to undervalue love. But alas, love must also serve as the vindication of all those innumerable women who merely satisfy their sensual wants, without asking the least return, and by their unrecompensed abandon only ruin the market.

ELFRIEDE—Marry me! There is still time for you to begin a new life! Marriage will reconcile you with society. You can be editor of a socialist paper, you can be a representative in the Reichstag! Marry me, and then even you will learn for once in your

life what superhuman sacrifices a woman is capable of in her boundless love!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Still without looking at her, stroking her hair.*] The best your superhuman sacrifices could do would be to turn my stomach. All my life I have loved tigresses. With bitches I was never anything but a stick of wood. My only consolation is that marriage, which you glorify so rapturously and for which bitches are bred, is a civilized institution. Civilized institutions arise only that they may be surmounted. The race will win beyond marriage just as it has surmounted slavery. The free love-market, where the tigress triumphs, is founded on a primordial law of unalterable nature. And how proud and high will woman stand in the world, so soon as she has conquered the right to sell herself, unbranded, at the highest price a man will bid for her! Illegitimate children will be better cared for then by the mother, than legitimate ones are now by the father. Then the pride and ambition of woman will no longer lie in the man who allots her her place, but in the world, where she struggles up to the highest position that her value can give her. Then what a glorious fresh vital sound the words "daughter of joy" will have! In the story of paradise it is written that Heaven endowed woman with the power to seduce. Woman seduces whom she will. Woman seduces when she will. She does not wait for love. And conventional society combats this hellish danger to our sacred civilization, by bringing woman up in an artificial darkness of

mind and soul. The growing girl must not know what it means to be a woman. All our institutions might go to smash if she did! No hangman's dodge is too base for the defense of conventional society! With every advance of civilization the love-business expands. The cleverer the world gets, the bigger is the love-market. And our celebrated civilization, in the name of morality, condemns these millions of daughters of joy to starvation, or robs them in the name of morality of their self-respect and life-vindication, yea, hurls them down to the level of beasts, all in the name of morality! How many centuries more will an i m m o r a l i t y which cries to Heaven ravage this world with the sword and ax of morality!

ELFRIEDE—[*Voiclessly whimpering.*] Marry me! You stand above and beyond the world! For the first time, to-day I offer my hand to a man!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Stroking her hair without looking at her.*] Materialism! Commercialism!—What would the world know about morality at all, if man could commandeer love as he bosses politics!

ELFRIEDE—I hope for no higher happiness from our marriage than the privilege of kneeling so before you all my life and listening to your words!

CASTI-PIANI—Have you ever asked yourself what marriage means?

ELFRIEDE—Till this moment I've had no occasion to do so. [*Rising.*] Tell me! I shall do everything to come up to your requirements.

CASTI-PIANI—[*Draws her onto his knee.*] Come

here, my child. I'll explain it to you. [ELFRIEDE is *prudish for a moment.*] Please keep still.

ELFRIEDE—I have never sat on a man's knee.

CASTI-PIANI—Give me a kiss. [*She kisses him.*] Thanks. [*Holding her off.*] You'd like to know what marriage is?—Tell me, which is stronger: a man who has o n e dog or a man who has n o n e?

ELFRIEDE—The man who has the dog is stronger.

CASTI-PIANI—And now tell me again, which is stronger: a man who has one dog or a man who has t w o dogs?

ELFRIEDE—I guess the man who has one dog is stronger, for of course, two dogs couldn't very well help getting jealous of each other.

CASTI-PIANI—That would be the least consideration. But he would have to feed t w o dogs or else they'd run away, while o n e dog takes care of himself and also if there is need protects his master from robbers.

ELFRIEDE—And by this abominable comparison you would explain the unselfish inseparable union of man and wife? Merciful God, what a life you must have had!

CASTI-PIANI—The man with one wife is economically stronger than if he had none; but he is also economically stronger than if he had to take care of t w o or more wives. That is the cornerstone of marriage. Woman would never have dreamt of this ingenious device!

ELFRIEDE—You poor pitiable man! Did you ever know a home and family? Did you ever have a

mother to nurse you when you were sick, to read you stories when you were convalescing, for you to confide in when there was something in your heart, and who helped you always and always, even when you had thought for the longest time that there was no more help for you on God's earth?

CASTI-PIANI—What I lived through as a child no human creature could live through without having his will and energy broken and ruined. Can you imagine yourself a young man of sixteen and still whipped because the logarithm of Pi won't go into his head? And the man who whipped me was my father! And I whipped back! I beat my father to death! He died after I'd beaten him once.—But these are trifles. You see what sort of creatures I live with here. I have never heard among these creatures the insults that were my mother's share all through my childhood and which her spitefulness earned afresh for her each day. But those are trifles. The slaps, blows and kicks with which father, mother and a dozen teachers vied with one another to demean my defenseless body, were trifling in comparison with the slaps, blows and kicks with which the vicissitudes of life have vied with one another to degrade my defenseless s o u l.

ELFRIEDE—[*Kisses him.*] If you could guess how much I love you for all those frightful experiences!

CASTI-PIANI—The life of man is tenfold death before death. Not merely for me. For you! For everything that breathes! For the ordinary man, life consists of pains, aches and tortures which

his body suffers. And if a man struggles up to a higher plane, in the hope of escaping the sufferings of the body, then for him life consists of pains, aches and tortures which the soul endures and beside which the torments of the body were a kindness. How horrible this life is is shown by mankind's having had to think out a Being that consisted of nothing but goodness, but love, but kindness,—and by all humanity's having to pray daily, hourly to this Being, in order to endure its life at all!

ELFRIEDE—[*Caressing him.*] When you marry me, pains of the body and soul-pains alike will have an end! You need not plague yourself any longer with all these frightful questions. My mama has a private fortune of sixty thousand marks, and after all their twenty-five years of happy married life, Papa hasn't an inkling of it. Doesn't the prospect lure you, of marrying me and having sixty thousand marks cash suddenly at your disposal?

CASTI-PIANI—[*Pushing her off nervously.*] You don't understand how to caress, young lady! You act like an ass that's trying to be a setter. Your hands irritate me! That's not because you haven't learnt anything. It's because of your having sprung from the enslaved love-life of conventional society. There's nothing thoroughbred in your body. You lack the necessary delicacy! Delicacy, modesty, shame! You lack the feeling for the effect of your caresses, a feeling that every thoroughbred child is born with.

ELFRIEDE—[*Springing up.*] And you dare to tell me that in this house?

CASTI-PIANI—[*Rising simultaneously.*] That I dare tell you in this house!

ELFRIEDE—In this house? That I lack the necessary delicacy, the necessary s h a m e ? !

CASTI-PIANI—That you lack the necessary delicacy and sense of shame! In this house of ill-fame I tell you that! Get it into your head, once and for all, with what fine tact these creatures apply themselves to their defamed calling! The girl most lately come into this house knows more about the soul of man than the most famous professor of psychology in the most renowned university. You, young lady, would assuredly experience the same disappointments here as you have always had. The woman who is created for the love-market can be recognized at the first glance. Her frank and regular features shine with innocent rapture and blissful innocence.—[*Regarding ELFRIEDE.*] In your face, with all due respect, I can find no trace of either rapture or innocence.

ELFRIEDE—[*Hesitating.*] Don't you believe, my lord, that with my iron will, my energy, and my insuperable enthusiasm for the beautiful, I might yet acquire the delicacy and the fine tact of which you speak?

CASTI-PIANI—No, no, madam!—please, no! Get rid of those notions on the spot!

ELFRIEDE—I am so deeply convinced of the moral significance of everything you say that the u t m o s t

sacrifice by which I could overcome my bourgeois helplessness would not be too great for me!

CASTI-PIANI—No, no. I won't agree to that! That would be horrible. Life is horrible enough. No, no, madam! Keep your fearful fingers off the one divine ray that pierces the shuddering night of our tortured earthly existence! What am I living for? Why do I take part in this civilization of ours? No, no! The one pure flower of heaven in life's thorn-thicket, befouled with sweat and blood, shall not be trampled out under clumsy feet! Believe me, I beg you, that I would have shot a bullet through my head half a century ago if it had not been that above the wail shrieking to heaven from birth-pangs, woes of life and death-agonies, still gleamed this one bright star!

ELFRIEDE—The utmost mental exertion fails to give me even an inkling of your meaning! What is that ray that pierces the night of our existence? What is the one pure flower of heaven that must not be trampled into the dirt?

CASTI-PIANI—[*Taking ELFRIEDE's hand and whispering mysteriously.*] Sensual pleasure, gracious lady!—The laughing, sunny enjoyment of the senses! Sensual joy is the ray, the flower of heaven, because it is the one unclouded bliss, the one pure rapture undefiled, that earthly existence offers us. Believe me when I say that for half a century nothing has kept me in this world but selfless worship of this one full-throated laughing joy, this

sensual pleasure that repays mankind for all the torments of existence!

ELFRIEDE—I think somebody's coming.

CASTI-PIANI—Lisiska, probably!

ELFRIEDE—Lisiska? Who is Lisiska?

CASTI-PIANI—The girl who studied those books on the suppression of the white slave traffic in your house! In a moment you can convince yourself if I have said too much! We are prepared for such occasions, thank heaven. [*Takes her down right.*] Sit down behind this screen. From here, even you can for once in your life watch the clear, unsullied bliss of two people whom the joy of the senses draws together! [*ELFRIEDE seats herself on the stool behind the screen, right. CASTI-PIANI goes to the centre door, glances out, and then retires behind the screen, left, and sits. HERR KÖNIG and LISISKA enter, centre. He is a young man of twenty-five, in a gay sport-suit with knee-breeches. LISISKA is dressed in a simple white garment reaching to the calf, black stockings, patent-leather slippers, and a white bow in her loose black hair.*]

HERR KÖNIG—

I have not come to while my time away,
A sensualist in the circle of your charms,
And will with gratitude and friendship pay
If quickly sober'd I can leave your arms.

LISISKA—

Speak not so friendly in my ear.
Here you are lord, and command us here.

Hesitate not to color my pallid
And bloodless cheeks with buffets untallied!
That for a whore like me
Is an unheard-of fee!
Helpless lamenting, sobbing and wailing
Need not cause you the slightest quailing.
Shallow's the bliss from such abuse!
Pile pitiless blow upon blow without truce!
If your fist should smash in my face entire
Even that would not slake my desire!

HERR KÖNIG—

I am not prepared for such words, such a
test. . . .

Is this a merry welcome for the guest?
You speak as if in purgatory already
Here, you atoned for lust enjoyed and
gone.

LISISKA—

Oh, no! Untamed the Monster, Lust, doth
eddy,

Raging forever in flesh, blood and bone!
Think you I, the devil's spouse,
Would ever have happened into this house
If my heart's horrible hammering stopped
When Rapture seized me and shone?
Rapture evaporates, dropped
On a hot stone!
And Lust, an unstilled throe,
A hungering woe,
Plunges, to find death, into this
And every abyss!

Are you not cruel, good sir, in your joys?
I should be sorry!
But what do you care for my noise?
Strike me, your quarry!

HERR KÖNIG—

If that dark urge is really yours, to go
From the last depths to something yet
below,—
I could shed tears that from the spring-
time crew
Of amorous girls I picked and chose just
you.
Out of your eyes, so innocent, so gay,
There gleamed on me a bliss without
alloy. . . .

LISISKA—

Do you wish that our time pass away—
And we have no joy?
Down there, over our rules and tenets,
Mother Adele sits, watch in hand:
Counts and reckons, immovable, bland,
My enjoyment's minutes!
[Pause.]

HERR KÖNIG—

You have grown tired of ecstasy at length
And hope for lassitude from tears and
pain,—
For some deep calm to overcome the strength
Of your hot craving day and night in vain.

LISISKA—

If I sleep, then please with a sudden hard
Punch in the ribs wake me up, well-jarred!

HERR KÖNIG—

That note was false! A flaw is in the reed!
—How can a human being understand that?!
Whistle at happiness—at life—you can
that,—
But sleep? No! that was blasphemy
indeed!

LISISKA—

I am not your property,
You need not protect me;
Spare not then so anxiously
The joys that still affect me;
Seek no means to comfort me;
Kindness knows not how to;
Who beats me up most mercilessly,—
He's the one I bow to.

You ask me
Whether or no
I still can blush?
Unmask me
With a quick blow,
And mark the flush!

HERR KÖNIG—

Cold sweat runs down me, chill'd in skull
and spine,
Shuddering!—Let me out! . . . Half in a
dream

I hoped to pluck the sweet fruits of love's
vine.

You offer thorns to me instead! . . . You
seem

A young wild thing; how came it that you
strayed—

Impossible!—from flower-paths to these
briars?

LISISKA—

Leave not my sore desires

All unallayed!

Turn not heartless away from your slave!

Before me I have my grave,

And my only hope is to leave behind

No more of this world than I needs must.

Think you, we only come to such lust

Because in this house we are kept confined?

No, it is but the senses' torturing thirst

Holds us here accursed!

But this, too, was reckoned without insight:

Night by night

I see it, blinding-clear:—that even

In this house no heaven

Of peace to the senses is given!

ELFRIEDE—[*In her hiding-place, to herself, with
astonishment.*] God Almighty! That is just the
exact contrary of what I've imagined it for
ten long years!

CASTI-PIANI—[*In his hiding-place, to himself, with horror.*] Devil! Devil! Devil! That is the exact contrary of what I've imagined about sensual joy for fifty years!

LISISKA—

Don't go away from me! Hear me, hard-hearted!

I was an innocent child, and started
Life earnestly, full of duty and zeal!
I could never carelessly smile,—but
feel—?! . . .

From my teachers, even my brothers and
sisters,

I often heard awed admiring whispers,
And my parents would both presage:
"You'll be the delight of our old age."

Then with a sudden blast

That was past!

And once-awakened lust

Grew over all bounds, all "oughts,"

Over all my thoughts,

Over all my heart's feeling of trust,

So that I marvel'd, driven

Infatuate, master'd, what it implied,

That I saw no lightning strike at my side

Nor heard any thunder from heaven.

Then it came to me—hope, that our life had
been given

For joy to us, joy never glutted nor dried.

HERR KÖNIG—

And this high hope you found was not
fulfilled?

—I speak, I know, as a blind man of—
of——

LISISKA—

No—it was only a hellish drive
Whence no joy remained alive.

HERR KÖNIG—

But when so many girls have died of love—
Was it with all of them—Desire unstilled?
—But then, how should such hordes of
women press
By thousands down your path of dire
excess?

LISISKA—

Have you no will to glory
In the stripes upon my body?
For what was it made so soft,—
For what was it so tender created?
Speechless looks have dilated
O'er stroke upon stroke here, oft!
Flagging desires anew to inflame
Boasting I tell from whom they came.

HERR KÖNIG—

Be still, I tell you! One more word thereon
And I'll have stayed too long! . . . 'Tis
plain to see

In your pale features how tempestuously
Youth fled from you! . . . Your innocence
 once gone,
Did he who robbed you of it leave you in
 shame?

LISISKA—

No—but another came,
Found glee and blame;
For always I swore eternal troth
To the young fools, and broke the oath.
Always I hoped my curse
Must disappear with another man.
Each time it was bitterness or worse.
No rest could be found for me, or can,
For 'twas always only the hellish drive
Out of which no joy came forth alive!

HERR KÖNIG—

So to this house you came at last, and lead
A life of riot and revel here indeed! .
Music resounds, champagne drips from
 the tables,
Laughter roars through the graying dawn
 full oft,
Nought the long working-day knows but
 the soft
Sound of hot tongues' husht lispings of
 love's fables.—
What a low, common beggar I must be
To you—proud queen of joy and ecstasy!

I came with what was mine from you to
purchase
A plain, straightforward interchange of
pleasure.
I could tear my hair with rage! For
without measure
Hideous is the lust that here besmirches
Those libertines your friends and you their
game!
They set no stops to their inhuman glee!
Hasten and wreath their limbs! A purer
aim
And element upbuoys and quickens me!
I sought refreshment, and have no desire
To smear myself in the earth's deepest
mire!

LISISKA—

Oh, stay! If you desert me now, 'tis
harder,—
'Tis night around me again! Don't go
away!
Like a lip-lash already each word you say
Flicks me, and stings my craving with
pricking whips:
Would you might loathe and hate me with
such ardor
That it would be your fists and not your lips
Whose blow on blow aches through my
body's smart!

Once you've been pressed to my heart
Then go back whence you came,
Smilingly write my name
In your notebook . . . —while with me
There will stay but the ghastly curse—to be
Once more in the grip of the hellish drive
Out of which no joy remained alive!

HERR KÖNIG—

I can't believe my senses now!—It seems,
You've fallen in l o v e with me? Oh, cruel!

—Spurned

By women, I have wept aloud and yearned
Thru many—how many—nights of tor-
tured dreams!

Is the first love in all my life now faltering
Toward me upon bought lips?!—Are you
not bound

To give to every stranger, without paltering,
His will,—and hopes of comfort would you
found

On me?—to me lay passionately bare
Your soul, whose lurid charms shall hold
me fast?

If e'er my lot so close to yours were cast
I should be seized with horror past compare!

LISISKA—

For God's sake, don't believe in my love!
'Tis my duty here to affect the dove!

Think to yourself just once what it means
 When suddenly someone parts the screens!—
 Rake up love's coals, be alive and elated;
 There is a m a n by God created!—
 —Do you want me to play that wretched
 game
 With y o u here?
 To feel but loathing when your high'st
 flame
 Burns thru here?!
 But if you thoroly with your Hunnish
 Fists my body and limbs will punish,—
 That, if you find pleasure in it,
 Can unite us till my dying minute!

HERR KÖNIG—

White robe of innocence! Spirit unstained
 By even this house! Your purity makes
 blind
 My eyes; your beauty takes my heart and
 mind
 With infinite gazing.—Rioting unrestrained
 In fierce self-martyrdom without repose—
 You fight the soul's unfathomable woes,—
 Death in your face, and in your heart hot
 hate
 For all earth's vain delights turned desolate!
 [*He kneels.*]
 Let me be friend, be brother to you! Whether
 You give your body up to me—lies deep
 Beneath us!—so have you exalted me!

To your slim knees here solemnly I vow
That only as soul cleaves to soul art thou
My own—so only am I thine—together!
Out of hell's agony to heaven's steep
You soared, and now unconscious of the
sweep,
Of lusts that ebb and flow beneath your
height
Must bleed your life out in sublimity
Thru me shall that be shown to all men's
sight!
From my chaste poetry the world shall
learn
To weigh the wrong and misery of sold love!
I swear it by the eternal stars above,
The purest light that in our night can burn.
Give me a pledge, avow to me openly:—
Have you by love been gladden'd? once? or
ever?

LISISKA—[*Raising him.*]

If you killed me now straight off, I could
never
Say it differently!
It was always only the hellish drive
Whence no joy remained alive.
Thus, once for all, it is in this place:
Here is the rendezvous
Of all to whom love is a pang without grace
And a hankering ever new!
What other chance callers may appear

Aren't taken in earnest by us here!
Men such as you
Are few
For they count for nothing where
We house, whom men compare
With beasts unheeded.—
But now have I yet succeeded
In bringing you round to grant
Comfort to my wild want?

HERR KÖNIG—

What wilderness of paths your hand may
lead me,
Still gleams a star above us that will speed
me!

LISISKA—[*Hugs and kisses him.*]

Then come, love! pliable at last, for trysts
In ancient, ne'er-disturbed tranquillity, "
As uttermost lust's calm bliss long known
to me!

Oh, if I only died under your fists!

[*Both exeunt, right.*]

CASTI-PIANI—[*Breaking out of his hiding-place, wildly.*] What was that?

ELFRIEDE—[*Breaking out likewise, passionately.*]
What was that! Worthless parasite that I am!
What did my withered brain ever think the joy of
the senses was! Self-immolation, glowing martyr-
dom, that's what the life in this house is! And I, in

my lying arrogance, in my threadbare virtue, supposed this house a breeding-place of depravity!

CASTI-PIANI—I am smashed and shattered!!

ELFRIEDE—All my youth, that the good God gave me overflowing with the desire and the power to love, —I have wantonly dragged it through the gray, soul-smothering dirt of the streets! Coward that I was, the sacredness of sensual passion seemed to me the basest reprobacy!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Stunned.*] That was the blinding-bright enlightenment that unforeseen breaks his neck who walks in his sleep on the ridge-pole!

ELFRIEDE—[*Passionately.*] That was the blinding-bright enlightenment!

CASTI-PIANI—What am I still doing in the world, if even sensual pleasure is nothing but a hellish flaying of man, nothing but a satanic butchery of mankind, like all the rest of our earthly existence?! So that's the true aspect of the one divine ray that pierces the horrible night of our tormented life! Oh, if only I had shot a bullet through my head half a century ago! Then I would have been spared this pitiful bankruptcy of my bilked and swindled spiritual wealth.

ELFRIEDE—What is there still for you to do in the world? I can tell you! You trade in girls. You boast you trade in girls. Anyway, you have the closest relations with all the places that count in the white slave trade. Sell me! I beseech you, sell me into a house like this! You can make a very lucrative bargain of me! I have never loved; and, surely,

that doesn't lower my value! I won't bring you any disgrace! You shall add, by me, to the honor in which your customers hold you! I promise! I will guarantee myself to you with any oath you ask me!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Half-crazed.*] What will keep me from breaking my neck? What will help me across the icy shudders of death?

ELFRIEDE—I will help you across! *I!* Sell me! Then you'll be saved!

CASTI-PIANI—Who are y o u ?

ELFRIEDE—I want to find my death in the joy of the senses. I want to give myself up to be slaughtered on the altar of sensuous love!

CASTI-PIANI—Am I to sell you—y o u ?

ELFRIEDE—I want to die the martyr's death that this girl who was just here is dying! Have *I* no natural human rights the same as others?

CASTI-PIANI—Heaven preserve me from it! [*With mounting emphasis.*] This—this—this is the derisive laughter of Hell, that rings above my plunge into death!

ELFRIEDE — [*Sinking to his feet.*] Sell me! Sell me!

CASTI-PIANI—The most terrible times of my life arise before me. Once before, I sold in the love-market a girl whom nature had not intended for it! For that crime against nature I spent six full years behind prison bars. Of course she, too, was one of those temperamentless creatures in whose faces one can see "big feet."

ELFRIEDE—[*Clasping his knees.*] On my soul I

implore you, sell me! You were right. My activity in combating the white slave traffic was unsatisfied sensuality. But my sensuousness is not weak! Ask me for proofs. Shall I kiss you madly, insanely?

CASTI-PIANI—[*In utmost despair.*] And this ear-piercing howl of suffering at my feet? What is that! This echoing shriek for help from birth-pangs, woes of life, and death-agonies I will no longer endure. I cannot stand this earth's continuous crying any longer!

ELFRIEDE—[*Wringing her hands.*] To you yourself, if you will, I will yield up my virginity! To you yourself, if you will, I will give my first love-night!

CASTI-PIANI—[*Shrieking.*] The last straw! [*A shot. ELFRIEDE utters a piercing yell. CASTI-PIANI, the smoking revolver in his right hand, his left pressed convulsively to his breast, totters to one of the arm-chairs and breaks down in it.*]

CASTI-PIANI—I—I beg your pardon—Baroness. I've—I've hurt myself.—That was not—not gallant of me——

ELFRIEDE—[*Bending over him.*] God have mercy, you haven't hit yourself with it?!

CASTI-PIANI—Don't—don't hurt my ears—shrieking! Be loving—loving—loving—if you can——

ELFRIEDE—[*Stands up in horror, both hands in her hair, stares at him and screams.*] No! No! No! I can't be loving with this sight before me! I can't be loving! [*Directly after the shot, three slim young girls, dressed exactly like LISISKA, have*

curiously one after the other stepped out of the three doors. Hesitatingly they approach CASTI-PIANI, and, with the minimum of action or emotion, gesturing silently among themselves, they essay to ease his death-struggles. He looks up and sees them.]

CASTI-PIANI—And that—and that—ve-vengeance? Spirits of vengeance?—No! No!—That—that is Marushka! I see you now. That is Euphemia!—That, Theophila!— — Marushka! Kiss me, Marushka! [*The slenderest of the three girls bends over CASTI-PIANI and kisses him on the mouth.*] No! [*In anguish.*] No! No! That wasn't anything!—Kiss—kiss me differently! [*She kisses him again.*]—So!—So, so, so!—I have de-deceived you [*slowly raising himself, supported by MARUSHKA*]—deceived you all! The joy of the senses—torture—bloody agony!— —At last—at last—deliverance! [*He stands, straight and stiff, as though seized with catalepsy, his eyes very wide open.*] We—we must receive—His Worship— —standing. . . . [*He falls dead.*]

ELFRIEDE—[*Drowned in tears, to the three girls.*] Well?—Is none of you girls brave enough to do it? You were more to this man than I was permitted to be! [*The three girls shake their heads and withdraw shyly, frightened, but cold and impassive. ELFRIEDE, sobbing, turns to the corpse:*] Then forgive me miserable! While you were alive, you abhorred me with all your soul! Forgive me that I come near you now! [*Kisses him passionately on the mouth.*]

Breaking into a flood of tears] This last disillusion, even in your fearfullest blackest pessimism you can never have conceived,—that a *v i r g i n* was to close your eyes! [*She closes his eyes and sinks, weeping piteously, at his feet.*]

CURTAIN

